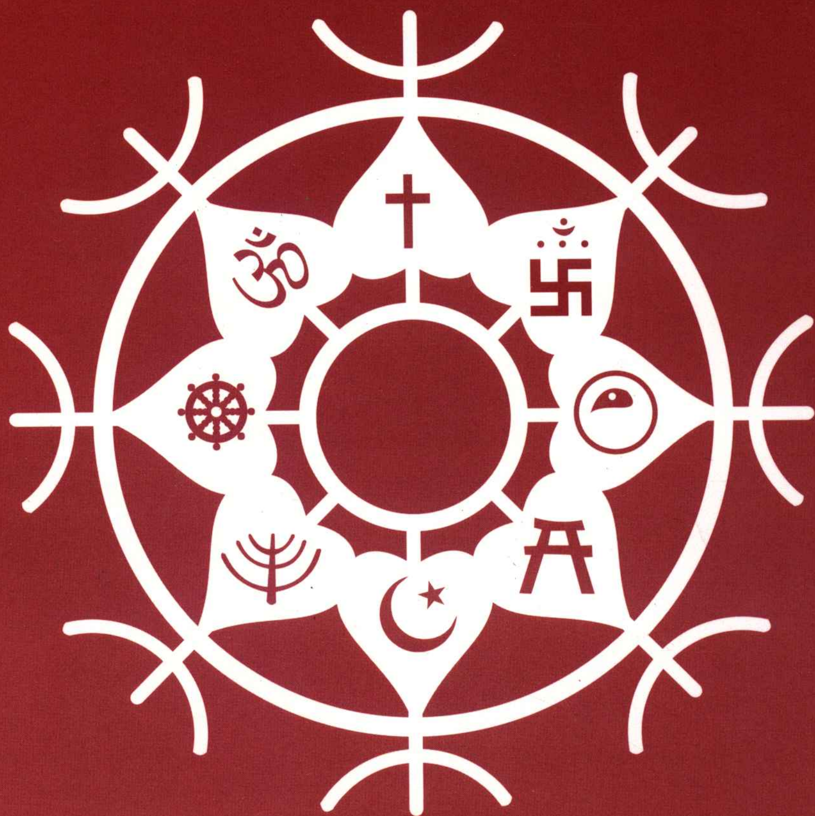
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LITERATURE AND ETHICS

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Editorial

THE ETHICAL IN LITERATURE

Oscar Wilde claimed that "[t]he sphere of art and the sphere of ethics are absolutely distinct and separate," while Wittgenstein categorically affirmed that "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same." [why no citation is given?] Literature and ethics have exhibited strong ties throughout human history and literature is regularly used for moral instruction. Although literature and ethics have different methods, strategies, and goals, they both are part of human lives and the history of literature is also a history of ethical codes as they are inscribed within the wider cultural context.

Functionality is the paradigm of Homeric ethics as it investigates what makes a good farmer, king or sailor; the ethics of the city-state, on the other hand, is concerned with what makes one a good person, good citizen, and ultimately what makes a good society. The Aristotelian dogmatic-didactic school used literary texts as an educational instrument while Platonic formalist-aesthetic school went against the inclusion of external interests, including ethics, in the domain of literature. The contemporary society though refuses to be told how to live its life, in fact, is told how to live its life much more than any previous generation by advertisements, media, markets, and social networking sites. Ethical considerations of texts are informed by the society and history in which they were produced and they, in turn, influence forms of life in the society. Often as the society changes so does its ethical practices. Hence, a critical and creative engagement between literature and ethics is a necessary and meaningful venture.

The Centre for the Study of World Religions (CSWR), Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore and Globethics.net India jointly organized a workshop in collaboration with Christ University, Jyothi Nivas College, St Joseph's College, Bangalore, to examine critically and creatively the interfaces of "Literature and Ethics," on Saturday, 2 March 2013. *Journal of Dharma* is publishing some of the fruits of the workshop in this issue dedicated to the theme Literature and Ethics. The papers presented in the workshop and the articles included in this issue look at the interface of literature and ethics critically and creatively. They offer a re-reading of significant texts and authors to bring out the ethical dimensions of those

literary texts. The texts examined are truly universal and global both geographically and conceptually.

Rica de los Reyes Ancheta presents a re-reading of Maria Rosa Henson's experience at the military brothel in the Philippines during the World War II, in her article "The Comfort Woman Story and the Pacific War Narrative." Maria Rosa Henson's autographical description of her experience of war and violence provides an alternative reading of the mainstream War stories which considered comfort women as inevitable collateral damage. The author successfully shows how the corrective use of the literature of a victim would serve to illustrate how a powerful narrative of negative experiences disturbs and challenges the sweeping claims of the dominant narrative. The conscription of comfort women is neither a minor evil nor a necessary collateral damage, but a major and fundamental damage when viewed from a more inclusive way of thinking that considers small stories as integral to the War's grand story. Henson, who braved exposure as a comfort woman, affirmed the inviolable dignity of a woman as a human person.

"The Dharma of *Kama*: *Kāmasūtra*'s Morality of Integrated *Puruṣārtha*," by Vikas Prabhu, persuasively argues that *Kāmasūtra* is not merely a *sūtra* on *kāma* – a text that would solely focus on enhancing sexual pleasure – rather it is *kāma-dharma-śāstra*, a treatise that aims to achieve a subtle balance between enjoyment of sensual and material pleasure along moral lines. Vātsyāyana lived in a society the boundaries of whose sexual traditions were constantly were at risk of being pushed by virtue of its diverse practices. Vātsyāyana's treatise, in effect, according to Vikas Prabhu, stands at the confluence of pleasure and morality, with a meticulous eye towards traditional compliance and scientific systematization. For Vātsyāyana, the value of *kāma* is not one of subservience to other components in the *trivarga* but an interdependent relationship intertwined essentially with the values of dharma and *artha*. Through his directive of a conscious and cautious approach towards passion and pleasure, Vātsyāyana weaves the thread of dharma through the integrated emphasis on *kāma* and *artha*, thus, providing a cloak of righteous mentality that societal beings, like the *nāgaraka*, can don, and eventually, in their effort towards righteous living, imbibe.

Etienne Rassendren, in "The Secular Ethic and the Pitfalls of V. S. Naipual's Non-Fiction," provides a re-reading Naipaul in and through the matrix of the secular ethic as a cultural practice. Rassendren discusses first the varied conceptions of the literary and its tensions with the secular and

the ethical; secondly he demonstrates by exposition as evidence the pitfalls of Naipaul's writings with regard to the secular ethic; and, thirdly, he argues by way of conclusion that Naipaul's writing is ideologically islamophobic bearing distortions of history, based on an overwhelming anti-Islamic discourse, which then makes his writing unjust and anti-secular. The author combines Michel Foucault's exposition of discursive power and Antonio Gramsci's explanation of hegemonic violence. His reading of Naipaul is "contrapuntal" in nature exposing Naipaul's ideological pitfalls and biases as an explanation of his Islamophobia.

It is the contention of Maheshvari Naidu, in her paper "Attending to the Patient: Bioethics and Medical Literature" that while there is always the need for clinical studies, written in a grammar of statistics and percentages and with an analytical vocabulary, there is equally an urgent need for medical texts and literature that describe the lived experiences of the patients woven into the discourse and description of the illness. Her concern is the 'ethics' in medical literature, or the embedded values and sense of 'right' within the texts, in terms of the (wholly clinical) descriptions of illness and health. Bioethics in medicine is not merely about ethical rules that govern how medical professionals ought to behave and enact their medical selves with the patient, but that it also extends to how the medical literature ought to be written for the interconnected community of medical students, practitioners and the patients. If the medical literature is barren and bereft of the personal and social face of the illness (like cancer) and of the actual vulnerabilities of the patients, there is very little that the practitioners are learning of the ill person, beyond merely the medical. She concludes by referring to the Hippocratic Oath as the quintessential piece of medical literature as it refers to medicine as both an art and a science. Narrative medicine which privileges the patients' experience of illness has also been put forward as a solution to an inçreasingly impersonal medical environment, where educators in the medical humanities, turn to narratives and narrative studies to teach medical students 'an emotionally fulfilling and interpersonally related professional practice.'

Ferdinand D. Dagmang in his "Ethic of Romance in the *Twilight* Series" examines creatively the Twilight Series by Stephenie Meyer. He comments on the following interrelated topics: 1) Meyer's dream and longings as the source of the novels' drive; 2) the novels' ethical approach to girl-boy romance as constituting the narrative's appeal and 3) the thirst for the old-fashioned moral values as the "chord in every reader's heart." He argues that *Twilight* is a timely offer to young adult readers who

consume it with enthusiasm because of their search and mood for what is right in romantic contexts. Meyer has successfully transformed *her dream* (dream[a]) and *longings* (dream[b]) into a creative and ethical act through literary composition. It is his contention that the convergence of the readers' response to *Twilight* as a dovetailing between the authorial ethical position and the readers' longing (dream[c]) for what is ethical.

My article, "Language and Truth of Aesthetical and Ethical Practices: Philosophical Explorations after Wittgenstein" examines creatively the family resemblance between Aesthetics and Ethics through a study of Wittgenstein's remarks on aesthetical and ethical discourses, judgements and practices which are interwoven with his philosophical investigations and his life. Instead of seeking analytic or ostensive definitions of aesthetic and ethical terms such as 'beautiful,' 'art,' 'good,' and 'just,' philosophical explorations after Wittgenstein should examine their inter-related and variety of uses. There are linguistic, conceptual and ontological family resemblances between Aesthetics and Ethics and with other practices in the stream of our lives. Life remains, as in the case of other practices, the bedrock of explanations and justifications for aesthetical and ethical practices and discourses.

The current issue of the *Journal of Dharma*, thus, presents a collection of articles that looks into the interface of Literature and Ethics in a variety of literary works. Have an enjoyable and fruitful reading!

Jose Nandhikkara, *Chief Editor*

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THE COMFORT WOMAN STORY AND THE PACIFIC WAR NARRATIVE
The Ethical Challenge of a Micro-Narrative

Rica de los Reyes Ancheta♦

1. Introduction

During World War II, the Japanese Imperial Army adopted various strategies for its conduct of War in the Asia-Pacific Region. One of those strategies required the maintenance of a military barrack's *ianjo* (comfort station or military brothel)[1] for the following reasons:

> First, it was a means to reduce the rape of civilians by members of the Japanese armed forces... Second, military leaders believed that it was important to gratify their men's carnal desires... Third, military-controlled prostitution was regarded as an effective preventive measure against venereal disease... Finally, the tight control of brothels by the military authorities was believed to be necessary for security reasons.[2]

These Four Reasons were considered greater evils than the creation of the *ianjo* – justifying, to the minds of the War leaders, the employment of *jugun ianfu.*[3]Those Four Reasons produced the Asia-Pacific comfort

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[1]See Chunghee Sarah Soh, "Sexual Enslavement and Reproductive Health Narratives of *Han* among Korean Comfort Women Survivors," in Neils Teunis and Gilbert H. Herdt, eds., *Inequalities and Social Justice*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 86-104; Yuki Tanaka, "Introduction," in Henson, *Comfort Woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery under the Japanese Military*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999, ix.

[2]Tanaka, "Introduction," xi.

[3]"Military comfort women" is a translation of the phrase *jugun ianfu*. This term has been initially used in a post-war novel titled *Jūgun Ianfu* published in 1973 by the Japanese writer Kakō Senda. Terms like "women and girls forced into sexual slavery," "war-rape victims," or "sex slaves," "war-rape victims" are also used in the literature. About two hundred thousand women were war-rape victims of Japan. See Karen Parker and Jennifer F. Chew, "The *Jugun Ianfu* System," in Roy L. Brooks, ed., *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy Over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, New York: New York University Press, 1999, 95-100.

stations where systematic rape-slavery of 'comfort women' became part of a soldier's discipline. In the forcible conscription of women to become sex-workers in army camps, injuries were committed (like utilizing a woman to satisfy the pent-up sexual drives of thousands of soldiers, to become a pleasurable and functional receptacle of war-driven males' libido, to become an extension of war logistics in the service of soldiers, to be deprived of care befitting a human being). The Japanese recognized these as evils of war, but labelled as lesser evils compared to the four greater evils the authorities purportedly sought to avoid.

Since the early 1990's, news about the conscription of women for the *ianjo* have been publicized. These were backed-up by comfort women's stories. Maria Rosa Henson was the first Filipino comfort woman who came out to tell her story. She responded to a radio broadcast by women activists, calling for Filipino comfort women to come forward. "One after another, women followed Maria's lead. Eventually, 169 women were identified as former 'comfort women.'"[4]

Maria Henson later revealed the details of her conscription in her autobiography, *Comfort Woman: Slave of Destiny*.[5] This micro-narrative stood in contrast to the larger Pacific war story waged by the Japanese Imperial Army. The justification that *ianjo* was just a minor damage which was necessary to Japanese army's efficient fulfilment of their military duties largely subscribe to denial of moral and legal responsibilities for establishing military brothels. Times of war are governed by international rules that uphold a sense of humanity even in the war zones. Upholding a 'collateral damage' justification veers away from the ethical question of liability that has caused tremendous suffering to women and children.[6]

Henson's narrative uncovers the atrocities of war and its destructive effects that are long-felt even after the war. Her specific story galvanized public opinion and pushed organized groups to rally behind the comfort-women war victims. Her narrative interrupted, disturbed, questioned and challenged the legitimacy and morality of the *ianjo* as a war strategy. Her autobiography embodies a particular disturbing counter-story to a global war that swept women under the four reasons. The micro-narrative compelled people to rethink and re-assess the damaging assumptions of comfort stations.

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[4]Parker and Chew, "The *Jugun Ianfu* System," xviii.

[5]Maria Rosa Henson, *Comfort Woman: Slave of Destiny,* Pasig Metro Manila: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1996.

[6]Parker and Chew, "The *Jugun Ianfu* System," 95.

Through her autobiography, this article will look into the *ianjo* and its four reasons which treat comfort women as inevitable collateral damage. Along with the evils inflicted on comfort women, I will show that the creation of comfort stations to avoid the four evils is logically and morally flawed. This corrective use of the literature of a victim would thus serve to illustrate how a powerful narrative of negative experiences should disturb and challenge the sweeping claims of the dominant narrative.

The conscription of comfort women is neither a minor evil nor a necessary collateral damage, but a major and fundamental damage when viewed from a more inclusive way of thinking that considers small stories as integral to the War's grand story. I will adopt a high-context perspective by pulling war intentions, events, and structures into the whole course and coordinates of the history of War (with the interruptive-inclusion of Maria Rosa Henson's narrative that completes the War story) and to make more explicit the less visible *major* harm which "collateral damage" or "minor damage" argument does not intend to include. I will discuss the "integral place" of collateral- or minor-damage stories within the broad story of War and argue that the nature of "minor" damage cannot be simply swept aside collaterally and, thus, dis-coordinated from War structures that logically create interlocking networks of events or mechanisms whose effects are still felt long after the War is over.

2. The Broader Pacific War Story: A Dominating Narrative

When the Japanese soldiers were deployed into war zones, they carried within them, in their bodies, identities and roles, the mark of their nation, the ethos of ultra-nationalism, and the ambitious intentions of their leaders. Implied in their conscriptions were the moving spirit of their nation and the disposition-forming wishes of their state leaders. It was thus logical to interpret that the establishment of comfort stations and the forcible conscription of comfort women were consistent with the overall direction of Japan's intentions in the wars it waged in China, Korea, and other nations of the Pacific region, including the Philippines. Japanese soldiers embodied such intentions.

World War II was one of the most notorious conflicts recorded in human history. With an estimate of 50 to 70 million fatalities, the world witnessed the most heinous crimes war-driven men could commit in defence of ambitions and alliances. Both the Allied and the Axis sides have incurred great losses, deliberate killing, genocide, and rape. The world has witnessed, in those atrocities, the arbitrary suspension of human

fellowship or camaraderie and the deliberate affirmation of belligerent qualities, such as boldness, militancy, suspiciousness, wariness, distrust, arrogance, roughness, fury, cunning, unrelenting bravery, unforgiving character, murderous and destructive temper. Those who were thus qualified fought the battle; those who won it were deemed powerful and superior. There were, however, the countless vulnerable victims, like the women, children, and the elderly whose lives depended on men who could fight for them or ensure their safety. Some women took up arms to protect themselves but most of them were subjugated and the war, which was instigated by men, had far-reaching effects on the world at large.[7]

While Germany, under Hitler, expanded its foothold on European territories, Japan in 1931 had invaded Manchuria, conquered much of mainland China in 1937, was drawn into a sustained conflict with Russia, and had entered into alliance with Italy and Germany for mutual support to "assist one another with all political, economic and military means."[8] Japanese leaders, dominated by army/navy officers and riding on ultranationalist sentiments, wanted further to secure the natural resources their country lacked. Japanese army leaders wanted these not only in Manchuria but also in Mongolia, China proper, and South Asia.[9] The ultimate objectives of expansion for the Japanese leaders were both racial and economic: to create a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, along the lines of the New Order in East Asia, which would include the Netherlands East Indies, French Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, Burma and the Philippines. In this sphere, Asian (but largely Japanese) leadership would prevail, and the peoples of the region (but, again, mainly of Japan) would enjoy access to the important raw materials and markets it contained. In the course of 1940, as the German armies overran much of Europe, the vision of the Japanese government expanded considerably.[10]

These intentions of Japan set the background of war activities and atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army at the onset of the Pacific War. Indeed, this war reflected Japan's wish to accelerate its

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[7]Alfonso P. Santos, *Heroic Virgins and Women Patriots: Female Patriotism During the Japanese Occupation*, Diliman, Quezon City: National Book Store, 1977, 10ff.

[8]Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the Second World War, 1933-1941*, 2nd ed., London: Routledge, 2005, 40.

[9]Spencer C. Tucker, "Origins of the War," in Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *World War II: A Student Encyclopedia*, Santa Barbara, California: ABC CLIO, 2005, 6ff.

[10]Henig, *The Origins of the Second World War*, 40.

development. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere slogan was really a euphemism for "Asia for the Japanese." Even if some Japanese leaders and influential thinkers considered Japan as the liberator of Asia against imperialism (of Britain and the United States), Japan's Pacific War was still imperialist, albeit an anti-imperialistic imperialism.[11] Japan did not want others to share its appropriated Asian earth.

When the Pacific War broke out, three armies were brought under the command of Imperial General Headquarters: the China Expeditionary Army, the Southern Army and the Kwantung Army. The Southern Army was given the task of occupying the Southeast Asia. This was divided into four individual armies: the 14th, 15th, 16th and 25th Armies. The hierarchy depicts the structure or order that placed the Emperor at the top, followed by the Imperial General Headquarters, area armies, armies, divisions (brigades), regiments, battalions and finally companies. This implies the total mobilization of the administrative organs or hierarchy at the national and local levels.[12] The 14th Army or the Philippines Attack Force under Lt. Gen. Homma Masaharu, composed of two divisions, or roughly 26,000 to 30,000 men, was deployed to the Philippines.[13] These were a portion of the 1.7 million military personnel of the entire Imperial Japanese Army in 1941 (which increased to 5.5 million in 1945).

Conquest of the territory of the enemy, its defeat and subordination, was the way to winning Japan's war. This 'male-centred' war intent, being on the offensive, also aimed at neutralizing the American fleet with a surprise attack on Pearl Harbour and seize America's central Pacific bases at Guam and Wake islands and then invaded the Philippines. Thinking it had crippled American naval power, Japan headed its way to seize Burma, Malaysia, Singapore and Dutch Indies, thereby, establishing an offensive and defensive ring in the South and the central Pacific.

Japanese territorial and economic expansionism became the driving motive of the Pacific War. Central to this motive was the Japanese nation-state already gripped by the ambitions of its male leaders. It was a fact that the Japanese military leaders enjoyed a great deal of independence from

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[11]Kenneth G. Henshall, *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*, 2nd ed., New York: Pallgrave Macmillan, 2004, 114ff.

[12]Hayashi, Hirofumi, *Structure of Japanese Imperial Government involved in Military Comfort Women System*, http://www32.ocn.ne/jp/modernh/eng09-1.htm, / accessed 26 March 2013.

[13]Gordon L. Rottman, *Japanese Army in World War II: Conquest of the Pacific 1941-42*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005, 26ff.

the elected civilian government. The Meiji Constitution provides that the War Minister was held accountable only to the Emperor himself, and not to the government. The Japanese Army's support was, thus, indispensable to the survival of the civilian administrations. The Japanese culture of appreciating its people as direct "descendants of deities" fuelled further its dominant centrist consciousness as the War Conqueror.[14]

The insatiable urge towards territorial and economic expansion is a distorted view that engenders further nationalist-advocacy, racial-supremacy, arrogance, and utilitarian dispositions. The Japanese people had long enjoyed a self-understanding that their nation descended from deities. This perspective, which fosters superiority, messianic complex, and sows militancy and belligerence, was a fertile soil to concoct war of dominance that entails the submission and subjection of others. To keep their role in the Empire of the Sun and in the Axis network, Japan's leaders must virtually display its deified conviction to eliminate opposing forces and utilize all means available, including innocent women-civilians.

3. Maria Rosa Henson's Experience of War and Violence

Maria Rosa Henson's quiet life in Pampanga had been altered by the Japanese military presence in the Philippines. Her family fled every time they heard of Japanese soldiers' roaming in towns and cities. Their simple life was disrupted by the abuses and victimization by the Japanese military. When she was raped by a Japanese officer and two soldiers, while she was fetching firewood, she felt deeply violated. Her painful experience brought so much sorrow and bitterness that she sought for a way to divert her attention to a meaningful cause. Thus, she became a member of the *Hukbalahap* (Armed National Resistance against the Japanese). While in a mission to collect some sacks of dried corn from the nearby town, she was informed that their task was to supply guns and ammunition to their comrades. These were hidden behind the sacks of corn. When they passed the checkpoint, she was terrified but pretended unaffected. She was stopped and the guard led her at gunpoint to the second floor of the building, the town hospital turned into the Japanese headquarters and garrison. There she saw six other women. She was given a small room with a bamboo bed that had no door, only a curtain. That night nothing happened to her but the following day was hell, signalling her initiation into being a comfort woman.

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[14]Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture: The Japanese-American War, 1941-1945*, Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1982.

> Without warning, a Japanese soldier entered my room and pointed his bayonet at my chest. I thought he was going kill me, but he used his bayonet to slash my dress and tear it open. I was too frightened to scream. And then he raped me. When he was done, other soldiers came into my room, and they took turns raping me.
>
> Twelve soldiers raped me in quick succession, after which I was given half an hour to rest. Then twelve more soldiers followed. They all lined up outside the room waiting for their turn. I bled so much and was in such pain, I could not even stand up. The next morning, I was too weak to get up. A woman brought me a cup of tea and breakfast of rice and dried fish. I wanted to ask her some questions, but the guard in the hall outside stopped us from saying anything to each other.
>
> I could not eat. I felt much pain, and my vagina was swollen. I cried and cried, calling my mother. I could not resist the soldiers because they might kill me. So what else could I do?[15]

Later on, she even viewed this as 'work' of a sex-slave for Japanese soldiers during World War II.[16]

> My work began, and I lay down as one by one the soldiers raped me. At six p.m., we rested for a while and ate dinner. Often I was hungry because our rations were so small. After thirty minutes, I lay down on the bed again to be raped for the next three or four hours. Every day, anywhere from ten to over twenty soldiers raped me. There were times when there were as many as thirty: they came to the garrison in truckloads. At other times, there were only a few soldiers, as we finished early.[17]

She (and her fellow worker-slaves) had to endure more excruciating and humiliating treatments, while hope and despair played inside her:

> Every day there were incidents of violence and humiliation. These happened not only to me, but also to the other women there. Sometimes I heard crying and the sound of someone being beaten up...
>
> When the soldiers raped me, I felt like a pig. Sometimes they tied up my right leg with a waist-band or belt and hung it on a nail on the wall as they violated me. I was angry all the time. But there was nothing I could do. How many more days, I thought. How many more months? Someday we will be free, I thought. But how?[18]

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[15]Henson, *Comfort Woman*, 60-61.

[16]Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Korean "Comfort Women:" Movement for Redress,* Asian Survey 36, no. 12, December 1996, 1227-1240.

[17]Henson, *Comfort Woman*, 64.

[18]Henson, *Comfort Woman*, 66.

4. Ethics of the 'Collateral Damage' on Comfort Women

War is often referred to as an actual and wide-spread armed conflict between contending forces. It is an intentional entry into armed hostilities and a test of the military, political, economic, and cultural mettle of engaged nations. The use of force and violence to annihilate and conquer the other party (the enemy) "engaged in harm" is taken for granted. Even the collateral damage inflicted on ecology and on those who are *not* actually "engaged in harm" (civilians, children, women, and elderly) is downplayed. War, nevertheless, has its own continuing and expanding story of destructiveness, which grows beyond the narrow intent to enter into war, beyond the spaces of combat, beyond the casualties among combatants, and beyond actual periods of engagement.

An unadulterated truth is that a war's story spawns more destructions than war intentions could predict; it produces destruction beyond the calculated (low-context) harm inflicted and directed on those immediately 'engaged in harm.' It generates destructive effects, which are felt even in times of concord. Under international law and the traditional ethics of war, the question of damage or harm inflicted on those 'not engaged in harm' is still framed within the subject of collateral damage or viewed as unintended consequence of actual exchange of hostilities or structured and obliquely constructed by the intent and deployments (structures) to win the war.

Collateral damage is not a question that is directly and categorically linked to the intent to enter into war. The meaning of damage is swiped collaterally and around the more central questions regarding which rules to observe when dealing with the enemy and its armed forces. One of these rules includes the 'collateral' obligation to discriminate between the civilian population and the legitimate military, political and industrial targets involved in war-engagement. Three things may be raised regarding this obligation: 1) non-combatants/civilians are to be treated differently; 2) that it is wrong to deliberately target or harm civilians, and 3) if civilian casualties cannot be avoided, these may be excusable if brought about collaterally (that is, unavoidable casualties in the course of legitimate offense and defence against those 'engaged in harm').[19]

However, this 'collateral damage' position of international law and the traditional ethics of war regarding the wrongness of the harm inflicted

[19]Collateral damage is a U.S. Military term for unintended or incidental damage during a military operation. The meaning can be expanded to refer to friendly fire, or the killing of non-combatants and the destruction of their property. http://english.turkcebilgi.com/Collateral+damage / accessed 26 March 2013.

on civilians hardly recognizes the fact that the term 'collateral' virtually snatches the meaning of 'harm' away from its logical source and connection: the intention to enter into war and to win it. This position treats collateral damage as an excusable event because of the claim that it has no direct connection with the deliberate war intent and the will to win the war. This position is questionable on two counts. First, localizing the intent by circumscribing it within the actual exchange of hostilities cuts fragments of war stories away from the global story of war, we know, via a holistic or high-context thinking,[20] that this is arbitrary and artificial, prejudicial to and discriminatory against potential victims. Second, by fixing intent on actual hostilities and de-linking the original war-intent from the so-called 'collateral' damage is a clear effort to find a justification for something that is clearly structured by, and thus part of, the intent and hostilities of war. The argument is clearly an escapist's cunning way of rationalization for cases that, in the first place, should not be compartmentalized and fragmented away from the whole context of a war. What is basically wrong with this approach is that we are forced to believe that selective judgments by the dominant should rule the judgment game, that smaller war stories are not coordinates of the war intent, and that the results are just those visible and quantifiable 'collateral' damage, thus, the non-visible and so, non-quantifiable, could neither be the subject of scrutiny nor of moral judgment.

The comfort women issue is clearly one that involved infliction of harm on persons during and after the war. Conservative sentiments among the Japanese authorities and citizens did not raise the issue of "collateral" damage in their reference to comfort women but affirmed that the forcible conscription of women to act as sex-slaves for Japanese soldiers was a necessary evil to avoid greater or other evils, like the commission of a generalized rape by the same Japanese soldiers on countless women and the spread of venereal disease. Clearly, this form of justification mirrors the collateral-damage rationalization. While the collateral damage argument denies direct responsibility for the unintended "minor" harm

[20]In a communication process, conversation partners will arrive at better understanding if they share a common knowledge of their physical worlds or internalize aspects of their cultures. In that case, they are said to be in a high-context communication. There is not much need to verbalize through explicit codes what are implicit in their worldviews. On the other hand, two conversation partners who do not share contexts may have to be more explicit with their transmitted codes to bring about understanding. The latter are said to be in a low-context communication. Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, New York: Anchor Books, 1977, 91.

caused on non-combatants, the comfort woman conscription justifies a perpetrated 'minor' harm on non-combatants to avoid the imagined and anticipated 'greater' harms. Thus, by intention and effect, the 'minor' harm of sexual slavery imposed on comfort women is deemed a 'collateral damage, a result of the avoidance of greater damage.

The Japanese occupation was replete with stories of human rights violations and sexual abuse.[21] Male combatants were mainly concerned about following orders and winning the war. The milieu itself during World War II bred violence, destructiveness, and abuse. It was not just the scores of people driven by hatred that brought about greater atrocities, but it was also the climate of war, ambitions, restlessness, revenge, and hard-heartedness that fuelled the fire of violence. Woman, being the weaker sex in the perspective of male strength and domination, had to serve the order in society by becoming the means for the male and for his sexual drive. It is against the male's more encompassing and bigger war story that one must view the story of Maria Rosa Henson as well as the fate of woman's dignity.

5. Abuse of Maria Rosa Henson: Challenging the Male's War Story

The *jugun ianfu* were utilized to release and satisfy the pent-up sexual drives of soldiers. It is assumed that to be more effective combatants, soldiers must be more confident and freed from (or less disturbed by) the physiological and psychological effects brought about by the prospect of facing death or mutilation in war zones.

Henson was subjected to sex slavery in April 1943, when the war was already turning in favour of the Allies and the Japanese troops were more war-strung. War zones expose soldiers to death and destruction. The ways these zones translate into bodily troubles were averted and given prior prescription by War strategists by eliminating emotional troubles in order to make soldiers more functional and battle-ready. The forcible conscription of *jugun ianfu* was considered an apt solution: to provide 'comfort' to soldiers and officers in order to keep them on the battlefields for long periods of time without the prospect of taking a leave.[22] Whether the sex-drive release or anxiety-reduction regimen for soldiers suited them well or not, it still caused the utter dehumanization of women. It brought

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[21] Zhang Kaiyuan, ed., *Eyewitnesses to Massacre: American Missionaries Bear Witness to Japanese Atrocities in Nanjing*, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

[22] Hayashi Hirofumi, *Japanese Comfort Women in South East Asia*, Japan Forum 10, no. 2, September 1998, 211-219. http://www32.ocn.ne.jp/-modernh/eng04.htm, accessed 26 March 2013.

about the destruction of the meaning of sexual intercourse as a celebration of mutual-giving and sharing of love; engendered a blatant disrespect of a woman as man's partner; diminished man as anxiety- and pleasure-driven individual; and sowed insult to the woman's family; her 'job' was an absolute torture of a nation's citizen. Such dehumanisations were de-linked from war intentions and construed as collateral effects of war.

Henson's story unveiled the presence of military brothels in the Philippines and revealed the sufferings endured by comfort women reduced into functional receptacles. A woman who is turned into sex slave suffers the most humiliating pain and anguish for being treated like a toilet bowl for scores of men's semen. When she is forced to 'welcome' men (a whole or couple of platoon sometimes), the meaning of intercourse even becomes more demeaning than a beastly copulation. Among humans, respectful desire, care, affection, and intimacy are vital to the meaning of sex. These values of human sexuality are totally absent inside a Japanese comfort station. Only pain, insult, injury, harm, damage, offense, suffering, ruin, cruelty – all effects of war imposed on a tool to ensure that the Pacific War soldiers are 'relieved' and comforted. A woman then, is accounted for, marked as an acquired useful war instrument, and set as a human implement for soldiers' momentary return to homeostasis. Such diminution of a person to a tool like this deprives a human person of respect due to her. She has become part of the whole war arsenal for the Pacific War's success. She is listed thus as one among armaments, vehicles, and supplies. Similar to food or water to be consumed, a woman is no longer afforded the appropriate rituals of courtship or seduction.

Comfort stations treated women as objects. Oblivious to women's suffering, military soldiers considered them as war instruments whose existence must serve the purpose of 'comforting' Japanese soldiers. While scores of soldiers preen at pleasurable orgasmic spasms, a woman could only painfully squirm and with tortured endurance must patiently wait until the last soldier signal the end of the day's 'comforting sessions.' Henson endured this kind of humiliation, torture, and abuse from the Japanese soldiers. Every day she had to service a number of soldiers in succession. Sometimes, however, she was given some breaks in the middle of a long comfort-session in order to clean and relax herself, and change the sheets to prepare for the next excruciating series of assaults.[23] She eventually suffered a miscarriage as a result of rape-sessions while

[23]Henson, *Comfort Woman*, 61.

suffering from an untreated malaria infection. After nine months of sexual servitude, Henson must have serviced more than ten thousand soldiers.[24]

Abduction, rape and cycles of sexual assaults are abominable acts of violation of a person's dignity. Utilizing women as living container of men's semen is even more atrocious and devious than the actual killing of an enemy engaged in harm. It is a vicious attack on her person, her worth, her life, her destiny. To treat her lower than Japanese soldier's enemy is to treat her in wicked contempt of her dignity and worth as a person. But, since every Japanese soldier conscripted for the Pacific War was driven by the logic of military rulers' dominance and ambition, low-context or compartmentalized thinking afforded them little of the essential affective capacities.

Ethics of war (in *jus in bello*) most often remain as a body of principles that are not translated into practice particularly in pre-established comfort stations. The absence of care and compassion served its deemed 'correct' intentions in times of war. The moral question however, still haunts them to this day: Were comfort stations vital and hence, inevitable to the imperialist scheme of Japan?

Henson's story elicits valid questions about the morality of *ianjo* and questions the devaluation of women as sex slaves.

6. Henson's Narrative: Unmasking the Moral Flaws of Four Reasons

This section serves to unmask the moral flaws of Four Reasons using Henson's story. I shall argue against the justification that *ianjo* prevented rape and endemic spread of venereal diseases. The alleged Four Reasons are morally wrong because these (1) disregard the intrinsic value and dignity of a person, (2) perpetrate harm and violence through sexual slavery and (3) inflict harm to the social body.

The four justifications (curbing the rising number of rapes committed by Japanese soldiers, sexually satisfying the soldiers for combat-readiness, preventing the spread of venereal diseases throughout Japan's territory, and maintaining tighter security) actually revolve around its alleged purpose, that is, to curb high incidence of rape. It is a fact that 'comfort stations' are organized prostitution dens which legitimize rape and sexual

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[24]"By now, I had served thousands of soldiers. Sometimes I looked at myself in the small mirror in my room and saw that what I had been through was not etched in my face. I looked young and pretty. God, I thought, how can I escape from this hell? Please God, help me and the other girls free ourselves from here." Henson, *Comfort Woman*, 69.

assaults. Rape or any form of sexual abuse is blind to the intrinsic value of the human person. This intrinsic worth does not come from a person's quality, achievement or personal merit; but because of the very fact that she is a person. Hence, she should not be used as a *means* for some other end. As Kant says, "Rational beings are called persons because their nature already marks them out as an end in itself, that is, something that may not be used merely as a means, and hence so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect)."[25]

When rape was legitimized via the use of military brothels, it posits a thwarted view of the inherent worth of a human person. Comfort stations were not humane centres that minimize harm on individuals. These were extensions of war zones that maltreated human beings and perpetrated sexual slavery. Therefore, *ianjo* is a direct assault on a human person, who is valuable and dignified. It destroys one's intrinsic worth and reduces a woman into a sex object. It subjected women to violence, mutilations, torture, and servitude. Testimonies of comfort women reveal the desecration of the human being in the military brothels.[26]

Dignity is an essential part of every human being. It cannot be bought or acquired. It cannot be violated, diminished or taken away because it is stamped in our being and flows from our connectedness with God. Thus, sexual assault on a woman devalues and injures this inherent dignity. Human dignity is trampled upon when women are treated as War implements or dispensable instruments.

Henson's narrative attests to the innumerable cruelties done to comfort women. Henson had to endure brutalities and inhumane treatment in comfort stations. Inside the military brothel a woman is unnamed and uncared for because she is considered merely a tool designed to provide 'comfort' to men.

Harm inflicted on Henson takes us further to a symbolic connection between a harm done to a person and to a social body. Sexual abuse of a woman is symbolic of an assault to a nation. Henson is a citizen of a nation; a representative of a people; and thus, a part of a whole. Her identity is connected to her clan, her roots, her social circle, her nation. Therefore, her raped body is a desecration of her being, a violation of her

[25]Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, New York: Cambridge, 1998, 37.

[26]Sarah C. Soh, *Japan's Responsibility toward Comfort Women Survivors*, Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper 77, May 2001, See http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp77.html/accessed 27 March 2013.

dignity and an expunction of her name. The subjugation of her body may also be construed as a subjugation of her nation.

The justification that *ianjo* curbs incidence of rape and prevents venereal diseases is a male-centred scheme to discredit the fundamental value of a human person and undermine a woman's inherent dignity. It is subtly framed as a remedy but it is in reality a victimization of woman – a form of hostility.

Like the concept of 'collateral damage' any justification for harm inflicted on comfort women is a form of linguistic arsenal.[27] Collaterality is an escapist's excuse for indirect casualties, which justifies harm yet removes accountability for the consequences of an action under the cloak of unintended effects or unavoidable casualties; thereby, allow necessary, lesser evil. Such utilization of language promotes half-truths and legitimizes inhumane acts. George Orwell has this to say:

> In our time political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible... Political language – and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists – is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.[28]

Language in the hands of the dominant can justify even the most heinous crimes.

To proffer that organized prostitution precludes greater harm and posits it as a 'good' is a fallacy. A person utilized for a military-schemed prostitution is a victim. *Ianjo* is neither a remedy nor a cure to venereal disease. There had been no guarantee that brothels had been exempt from venereal diseases.[29] Testimonies of War victims and prisoners in fact, acknowledged its endemic spread even in the military brothels where violent assaults on women were common and evidence of a breeding ground for sexual abuse was taking place.[30] Hence, the four reasons for establishing *ianjo* are morally flawed.

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[27]Zygmunt Bauman, "Collateral Casualties of Consumerism," *Journal of Consumerism*, 7.25 (2001). See http://joc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/accessed March 25, 2013.

[28]George Orwell, *A Collection of Essays*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1953.

[29]Soh, *Japan's Responsibility toward Comfort Women Survivors*, 2.

[30]Karen Parker and Jennifer Chew, "Compensation for Japan's World War II War-Rape Victims," *Hastings International and Comparative Law Review* 17 (1994), 498-510.

Henson's story still questions the delinked 'collateral damage' from real and actual hostilities done to women. One cannot just cut fragments from the intentions of War and argue that victims of war were uncalculated casualty. Henson's abduction, rape, enlistment as comfort woman, her failed marriage, her struggles to regain her confidence and overcome shame form part of the fabric of her life. Hence, she is neither an unanticipated casualty nor an unintended consequence. She is a victim. Harm inflicted on her and hundreds of thousands of women denied them of their rightful value and dignity.

If respect must be accorded to every person, every woman has the inviolable right to be regarded as a human being, deserving of what every man enjoys under the sun. Hence, considering her intrinsic value, woman must not just serve the purpose of filling in man's insatiable desire for success or comfort or pleasure. To be forcibly conscripted, then, in the 'comfort stations' is to be rendered a woman depersonalized and violated.

6. Conclusion

During war, intended or unintended harm directed to civilians must not be misconstrued as inevitable. There is a logical connection between the intent and the story of the unregulated will to win the war by all means. This will to win can be read in the practices of war leaders and their subordinates. Oftentimes, such a will to win even if difficult to document is given away by the ways it has violated the set of benevolent principles, like respect, care, and compassion. But could such a set of benevolence be really translated into practice via war rules or international laws? What sorts of teeth have the rules and laws of war on people engaged in atrocities that they should be expected to show respect, care, and compassion to their enemies – when these human affective qualities are really supposed to flow from respectable, caring, and compassionate characters? Granted there are respectable, caring, and compassionate characters among soldiers, would the structures of war and atrocities not transform them into parts of war machines?

The actual cruelties done on women through comfort stations are symmetrical to the World War II stories of annihilation and conquest where the civilians, particularly women and children, were the victims. These cruel acts should not be dis-coordinated with armed conflict. Rather they must be seen as fundamentally part of the actual exchange of hostilities.

Maria Rosa Henson's story is a validation of cruelty to and neglect of woman as person. The Japanese occupation brought with it greater hostilities due to their focused interest on expansionism, territorial, cultural and economic ambitions. The Japanese soldiers who were deployed in the battles were indoctrinated to fight, annihilate, and conquer. Thus, women became just extensions, as war logistics – and were utilized to produce comforts for men. The military brothels and its justification through the Four Reasons are morally flawed. The devaluing of a woman is a neglect of her intrinsic value; her connectedness to humankind; a desecration of her being; an assault to her nation. The male-driven desire to win the battle and the low-context disposition of male psyche that rationalizes sexual abuse as inevitable in war should be rectified by restoring the dimmed image of God in a comfort woman. Henson, who braved exposure as a comfort woman affirmed the inviolable dignity of the human person. Her story unmasked the ills and wills of War and disturbed preconceptions about 'collateral damage' and comfort stations. It proved that War and the establishment of *ianjo* dehumanized women and bereft the world a place of care.

Maria Rosa Henson's story, thus, is not a compartmentalized account of what transpired during the Japanese Occupation. Her story is integral and substantial to the male-dominated language of War. Her life is a strong evidence that a comfort woman is not just an incidental damage but an intended harm that is tantamount to direct hostility to civilians. An organized and systematic brothel could not have otherwise served its purpose if its intent was de-linked to the original intent of war.

Her narrative could be an indirect, but fundamental, gateway to our present or to a future that looks to woman as genuinely an indispensable partner, a significant collaborator of man, and a companion in a life that should not be dominated by the male's utilitarian compartments.

The case of Maria Rosa Henson seems to be a mere story of the past, but it continues to be a relevant point of assessment of how a male-dominated social order operates and even allows dehumanization of women. Henson's life still questions systems and every process of colonization and their effects on a nation and the identity of human persons.

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THE DHARMA OF *KĀMA*
Kāmasūtra's Morality of Integrated *Puruṣārtha*

Vikas N. Prabhu♦

1. Introduction

Sexuality has been one of the biggest human preoccupations, hence the usage of several sexual analogies to understand the world around us. For instance, ancient cults believed rain to be the seminal seed of the heavens, and the Earth's seasonal cycles were compared with menstruation in women.[1] Sexuality has commanded a significant share in the human discourse of every century, either in the eagerness to explore it, or through fervent attempts to define it, or in the struggles to suppress or sublimate it. If the beginnings of literature in the West saw sexuality embellished in erotic themes of Homer, Hesiod and Ovid, the ancients of the East were no less enthusiastic in their amorous dispositions.

Taoism, a major influence on the Chinese views on sex, subtly integrates ethics with sexuality,[2] by underlining that sexual coition is an act of complementary participation, with a harmonizing intent, and not one where each partner aims for his or her sexual emancipation alone. The ancient *tāntric* texts cannot be fully grasped without a perspective of sexuality. Worshipping the phallus, not just as an image of the male ego but a representation of earth's potency itself,[3] is a popular cult practised by Śaivaite sects that trace its lineage to the *tantras*. In the Ṛgveda, *parāhatā*, a word for tilling the earth, is explained with connotations insinuating a sexual longing in the wetness of moist earth.[4] The Ạtharvaveda contains

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[1]Clifford Bishop, *Sex and Spirit*, London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 1996, 16.

[2]Taoism believes the human body contains *yin* and *yang* essences; *yin* predominating in the female and *yang* in the male, and intercourse brings about a balance, consequently leading towards a peaceful life; see Vern L. Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976, 282.

[3]Thomas Moore, *The Soul of Sex: Cultivating Life as an Act of Love*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998, 42.

[4]Ivo Fiser, *Indian Erotics of the Oldest Period*, Praha: Universita Karlova, 1967, reprint ed., New Delhi: Gaurav Publishing House, 1989, 44.

spells to selectively secure or destroy one's virility.[5] In the Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad the sexual act is compared to a sacred sacrifice. The Śatapata Brāhmaṇa correlates the construction of the sacrificial altar with heterosexual union; the altar as the woman and the fire as her male counterpart and the overall rite as an embrace of the two; and the kindling of the sacred fire using friction-sticks as coition between eternal lovers.[6] Scriptural sexuality reflected in social life as well – the Vedic Indians embodied a sexual openness in their social attitude. Sexual life in Vedic India was predominantly heterosexual, yet other so called perversions like homosexuality, sodomy, oral coition, etc., were also in practice. Incest was depicted as a matter of fact, especially portrayed through the mouthpiece of Vedic gods, while premarital intercourse was accepted and extra-marital relations were practised widely. Virginity does not seem to be mandated of women at the time of marriage.[7] It was in this melting pot of sexuality that Mallanāga Vātsyāyana lived to create the *Kāmasūtra*,[8] which, through a subtle integration of sexuality with moral values and traditional tenets, promptly serves to inculcate sexual maturity in its age.

2. Context of the *Kāmasūtra*

Vātsyāyana was not an Epicurean in any sense, yet he was no puritan either. While his hedonism was buoyed by humanistic inclinations, it was also weighed down by a diligence towards morally conducive conduct. He firmly situates his work in the socio-religious context of his times. Vātsyāyana lived in a society, the boundaries of whose sexual traditions were constantly are risk of being pushed by virtue of its diverse practices. He must have pondered the naked indulgence of the society into sexual

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[5]B. Kuppuswamy, *Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985, 237.

[6]Fiser, *Indian Erotics of the Oldest Period*, 109.

[7]For detailed discussion with examples see Fiser, *Indian Erotics of the Oldest Period*, 45-80; Also see Haran Chandra Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India: Study in Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 1984, 4 and 177; For instances of incest amongst Vedic gods, see *Ṛgveda* X.10, *Ṛgveda* X.61.5.9 and *Ṛgveda* X.162.5

[8]The author uses Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra: The First Unabridged Modern Translation of the Classic Indian Text by Vātsyāyana Including the Jayamangalā Commentary from the Sanskrit by Yashodhara and Extracts from the Hindi Commentary by Devadatta Shāstrā*, trans. Alain Daniélou, Vermont: Inner Traditions India, 1994, as the main translation reference as well as the source for verse level quotations.

matters which coupled with creativity and lustful hunger would unfailingly seek new frontiers of experience. His concern is laid out in his own words, where he says,

> Passion feeds on varied practices. Variety fosters mutual attraction. [For instance] the courtesan is interesting to an erotic man due to her [various] talents...[9] passion knows no rules, nor place, nor time...[10] the fantasies a man invents under the effect of erotic excitation are not imaginable even in dreams...[11] moral objections do not resist the mounting of passions.[12]

Hence he created the Kāmasūtra in an attempt to curb the inordinate ballooning of sexuality and to lead it towards harmonizing human nature, aimed at ensuring well-being of the society through a complementary integration of individual as well as societal prerogatives.

His vision is of a society that functions harmoniously without undue suppression – one that recognizes and pursues its ends while never losing the bearing on its limits. Vātsyāyana lived at a time when great cities with economic prosperity thrived across the Indian heartland,[13] and hence, it became imperative to re-establish the ethical boundaries of communal living in accordance with the changing value systems. The Kāmasūtra by virtue of its systematic socio-ethical directives endeavours to provide a firm base to a world of shifting moral grounds.

3. Sexual Insight with Ethical Outlook

The *Kāmasūtra* is a widely misinterpreted text, mainly owing to current marketing strategies, who, in their attempt at glorifying glamour and frenzy of sensual tumult, have ended up relegating the didactic image of *Kāmasūtra* into a mere sex-manual. It is a manual on sex, nevertheless, but not one of pornographic nature. The *Kāmasūtra* does not sensationalize sex anymore than a book on the culinary arts being seen as advocating gluttony. It is, in essence, a codification of the various sexual themes that have remained relevant in every society throughout the course of history. Vātsyāyana's treatise, in effect, stands at the confluence of pleasure and morality, with a meticulous eye towards traditional compliance and scientific systematization.

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[9]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.4.25, 135.
[10]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.3.2, 120.
[11]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.7.32, 166.
[12]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 5.1.44, 317.
[13]For details see Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, 148.

Kāmasūtra is a book that looks upon sex as a necessary, yet not sufficient, condition in the life of the ideal *gṛhstha*, focusing not so much on value appreciation of sexual matters as it does on guiding the householders' mind towards a cautious, disciplined, and morally compliant experience of sexuality. For instance, in part I chapter II, Vātsyāyana mentions:

> The development of the transcendent aspect of human love in the couple, together with mutual progress, is not possible for animals, birds, or insects. Men who do not understand the ultimate meaning of sexual pleasure behave like animals... Man's nature is not only animal, and he may not follow his desires at will, like a beast. Man must keep his aims before him: virtue, material success, the begetting of sons, and the growth of his family... [Also,] animals and birds make no difference between brother and sister, mother and father, etc., and their life as a couple is not for life.[14]

Furthermore, Vātsyāyana chooses as his subject the individual exclusively involved in the social stream of life, namely the *nāgaraka*, the well-bred well-endowed householder citizen along with his familial counterpart – his one or many legitimate wives – and interludes with other participants in the social fabric like prostitutes, kings, ministers, messengers, maids, nurses, etc. Vātsyāyana's exclusive focus on the *ganikā* – the beautiful, intelligent, and well educated courtesan – and her professional quiddities, though raises questions on his compliance towards a moral and cultural framework, is nevertheless an important signifier towards his social and material aspirations. The extant of the *Kāmasūtra*, seen with the *nāgaraka* on the one side and the *ganikā* on the other provides it with a comprehensive baseline for its intended signification of *kāma* and *artha*. Furthermore, Vātsyāyana is categorical in excluding the pre- and post-*gṛhstha* stages from the purview of his doctrines. According to him, "Old age must be dedicated to the practice of virtue and spiritual pursuit [*mokṣa*]... [and] celibacy is recommended during the period of study, for the acquiring of knowledge."[15]

Hence, it can be seen that the *Kāmasūtra* attempts to focus exclusively upon societal beings for whom sexuality is an integral part of conducting their lives, and attempts to impress upon them the need to approach pleasure with the attitude of a connoisseur and not like a starving man who gives more importance to the quantity of food rather than its

[14]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.17-20, 33-37.

[15]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.4-6, 26.

quality. In the words of Kochuthara one may, in this context, assert that the "*Kāmasūtra* is not a treatise on hedonistic sexual pleasure, but a treatise on culturing sexuality."[16] The aspect of cultured approach is duly highlighted when Vātsyāyana categorically lays down,

> One cannot give oneself over to pleasure without restrictions. One's activities must be coordinated taking due account of the importance of virtue and material goods… The lewd man is vain. He undergoes humiliations, does not inspire trust, and attracts people's scorn.[17]

Therein, for Vātsyāyana, lies the elevating of experiencing pleasure from an animal level to a human level, and as a moral consequence of which prevents one from giving oneself over to an exaggerated sexual life and hence saves the individual and his or her relations from getting destroyed.[18] Balancing the pursuit of pleasure with moral abidance is the ideal conduct: "Wise men choose ways of acting that allow them to achieve the three aims of life without letting the pursuit of pleasure lead them to ruin."[19]

4. *Trivarga* as the Integrated *Puruṣārtha*

Kāma, inasmuch as embodying the feeling of desire, can be viewed as the base of every intentional human drive. Desire, then, becomes a necessary presupposition to any and every end that is in the purview of human pursuit. In effect, even moral behaviour or its consequent liberation cannot manifest without first being preceded by a desire for them. Hindus, therefore, acknowledge *kāma* as one of the *trivargas* – the triumvirate of the ends of life – whose fulfilment leads one to *mokṣa*, the final *puruṣārtha* in both a literal and metaphysical sense. The greatest of authorities acknowledge the high pedestal of *kāma* – Manu subscribes to *kāma* as a *puruṣārtha* but subjugates it to dharma at all costs, while Kauṭilya places *artha* in an exalted status. The prudence of Vātsyāyana, though, sees it differently. In part I chapter II, he starts with an affirmation of the importance of *kāma*, while concurrently subsuming it in an integrated *trivarga* framework,

> Sexuality is essential for the survival of man, just as food is necessary for bodily health, and on them depend both virtue and

[16]Shaji George Kochuthara, "*Kāma* without Dharma? Understanding the Ethics of Pleasure in *Kāmasūtra*," *Journal of Dharma* 34, 1 (January-March 2009), 69-95, 91.

[17]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.32-33, 42.

[18]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.34, 42.

[19]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.40, 44.

> wealth... [However] one cannot give oneself over to pleasure without restrictions. One's activities must be coordinated taking due account of the importance of virtue and material goods... Whether one pursues the three aims, or two, or even one, the achievement of one of them must not be prejudicial to the other two.[20]

He recognizes the interplay between the three *trivarga* components, with dharma, *artha* and *kāma* having an importance not of its own standing but with reference to successful and congenial realization of harmonious social order, towards which the *gṛhstha*, owing to his productive and regenerative responsibility, may be seen as a prime contributor. He avoids the fallacy of unilateral view, instead arrives at a balance of values that first, clearly delineates the role and significance of *kāma* with respect to dharma and *artha*, and second, places it in the perspective of a holistic *trivarga*. For Vātsyāyana, the value of *kāma* is not one of subservience to other components in the *trivarga* but an interdependent relationship intertwined essentially with the values of dharma and *artha*. Hence, Vātsyāyana models *trivarga* as a compound *puruṣārtha* in itself, inhering from a mutual and shared signification of dharma, *artha* and *kāma*.

5. The Holistic Ethical Imperative

Vātsyāyana's holistic emphasis on the *trivarga* is substantiated through his two-pronged approach, wherein he delves in depth over subjects that have a bearing on *kāma* as well as *artha*. At first, his detailed treatment on all modalities of the lifestyle of a *gṛhstha* embodies a comprehensive treatment of *kāma*, insofar as the applicability of *kāma* upon the householder citizen is concerned. An entire chapter is dedicated to setting the right framework for a *gṛhstha*'s life and living, in order to ensure a clean and congenial atmosphere that makes possible the mature experience of pleasure.[21] Parts III and IV of the *Kāmasūtra* methodically elucidate the process of acquiring a wife and ways to maintain conjugal understanding through the channel of sexuality. Part II is the heart of the discourse on *kāma* treating at great length allowances and restrictions regarding amorous advances, and quite apparently, is also the section responsible for lending it the sex-manual sobriquet. This part dealing with sexual postures, embraces, petting, caresses, blows, sighs, scratching, and the like, throws explicit prominence on the aspect of pleasure in sexual encounters. Furthermore, there existed an implicit connection of *kāma* with *gṛhstha*

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[20] Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.32-40, 42-44.

[21] See Part I, Chapter 4 in Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*.

stage as Spellman emphasizes through the allegory of Kāma, as the Hindu Eros, being associated with Vasantha, the spring wind deity.[22] Thus, the emphasis on *kāma* is duly treated in all facets of *gṛhstha*'s sexuality – in the preconditions, mindset, communication, performance, expectation and coordination of sexual matters. Vātsyāyana, however, treats *artha* in the same vein as *kāma*. For him,

> *Artha* signifies material goods, wealth. *Artha* consists of acquiring and increasing, within the limits of dharma, knowledge, land, gold, cattle, patrimony, crockery, furniture, friends, clothing, etc... It is from those that know their subject that one can decide the time for sowing or the methods for raising cattle.[23]

Artha even gains prominence over *kāma* in the context of prostitution and royalty, as Vātsyāyana says, "Money is the basis of royal power… It is the means of realizing the three aims of life, even in the case of prostitutes."[24] In part I chapter III, where the sixty-four arts are listed, Vātsyāyana lays down the purpose of being acquainted with the arts as,

> [Women] divorcing their husbands, or if a misfortune should happen to him, they [can] go to another country and live comfortably... [and] A man who is expert in the arts, even though suffering a certain contempt, has success with women.[25]

Hence, through the interleaving of the goals of material prosperity and pleasure gratification, Vātsyāyana achieves the holistic approach of emphasizing on both *kāma* and *artha*.

The thread of morality runs all through this integrated approach. For instance, while laying down the rules for the lifestyle and conduct of a *nāgaraka*, Vātsyāyana advocates the showing of kindness to one's employees, respect towards one's dependants and courtesy in social transactions.[26] Discussion on sexual advances and foreplay is accompanied by a clear caution to avoid indulgence and recklessness:

> One must in all cases know when to stop if there is risk of mutilation or death… A countless number of people are imprudent and ignorant of the rules and, driven by passion in the ardour of their erotic practices, are unable to measure the consequences… the fantasies a man invents

[22]John W. Spellman, "Introduction" to *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, by Vatsyayana, trans. Richard F. Burton, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009, 23.

[23]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.9-10, 28.

[24]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.15, 31.

[25]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.3.20-21, 56.

[26]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.4.36, 73.

> under the effect of erotic excitation are not imaginable even in dreams… like a speed-maddened horse, flying at a gallop and seeing neither holes nor ditches, two lovers blinded by desire and making furious love do not take account of the risks involved in their conduct.[27]

Men are advised to treat their female counterparts, whether she be the wife, lover, or a preferred courtesan, with fragility and a clear assessment of the partner's endurance limits.

> … in his sexual behaviour with a girl, an educated man takes into account his own strength and the fragility of the partner. He knows how to check the violence of his impulses, as well as the girl's limitations of endurance.[28]

Thus, through his directive of a conscious and cautious approach towards passion and pleasure, Vātsyāyana weaves the thread of dharma through the integrated emphasis on *kāma* and *artha*, hence providing a cloak of righteous mentality that societal beings, like the *nāgaraka*, can don, and eventually, in their effort towards righteous living, imbibe.

6. Morality as an Undertaking

Vātsyāyana does not wear the hat of a strategist, though the *Kāmasūtra* has a clear strategy of moral rectitude, neither does he put on the gown of an ontologist, though the *Kāmasūtra* stands upon an epistemological foundation of human values; instead, he plays the role of a social scientist and a conscientious moralist.

As a scientist, he is absolutely meticulous with the subject matter of every chapter, incorporating diligent classifications and categorizations. For instance, part II chapter 1 delves into the classification of male and female characteristics according to their sexual dimensions, ardour and tempo, part II chapters 2 through 7 give detailed elucidations of various amorous advances, and part II chapter 6 exclusively deals with different types of sexual postures. Every assortment seems almost exhaustive in itself. The comprehensiveness of his taxonomy is further validated through his citation of relevant authoritative references. The entire chapter I part 1 is dedicated to invocation of these references. For instance, the extant of the chapter on courtesans (part VI of *Kāmasūtra*) is claimed to be the scholarly work of Dattaka, who was an accepted authority on courtesan

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[27]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.7.27-33, 166.
[28]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.7.34, 166.

matters.[29] As a moralist he takes this data of scientific precision, and coats it into packets of practical directives, rolling it into the language of aphorisms.

This is done so that its target audience – the average householder – receives it without defiance and perplexity. The *grhstha* is an individual managing several priorities and responsibilities. His life is not unidirectional. Unlike the stages of *bṛhmacarya*, whence focus is solely on culturing dharma, and *sannyāsa*, whence focus is on attaining *mokṣa* alone, the passions of a *grhstha* are not singularly directed towards a single aim. The *puruṣārtha* for a *grhstha* is the *trivarga* as a whole, as the one who does not devote his energies towards the fulfilment of all three – dharma, *artha*, and *kāma* – together risks misdirecting his socially productive capacity. Hence, having engaged his creative faculties in the balancing act of juggling individual goals with conjugal and social commitments, a *grhstha* would, understandably so, be intellectually sapped and exhausted, and it would be much to his preference if he had to deal with simple manuals giving directives in elementary language, rather than dreary didactic professions. *Kāmasūtra*, in response to this need, avoids plain moral discourse and instead takes the holistic approach; one, where the moralist and social scientist work together to present morality not as a sermon rather as an undertaking – where the followers who duly perform their actions in accordance with directives (much like following a manual) become automatically ethical without involving any elaborate reasoning or deliberation on their part.

7. Materialist and Rationalist Blend

Vātsyāyana takes along both the materialist and rationalist perspectives in order to propagate his model of *kāma-dharma*. This stand is necessitated due to the very nature of *kāma* and *artha* being material fulfilments, and dharma, owing to its metaphysical nature, having a predominantly rational essence. The basic materialist tenet of the *Kāmasūtra*, as already seen above, is in its advocacy towards the experience of *kāma* as well as in its acknowledgement of *artha* as the prerogatives of life. Acute materialist inclinations are evident in part I chapter 3 where, in reference to the sixty-four arts described by him, Vātsyāyana says:

> [The women who] divorcing their husband, or if a misfortune should happen to him, they go to another country and live comfortably on

[29]For more on Dattaka's authority see A. M. Shastri, *India as Seen in the Kuttanimata of Damodara Gupta*, Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996, 181.

their savings [earned through the knowledge of the arts]... a man who is expert in the arts, even though suffering a certain contempt, has success with women...[30]

Thus suggesting the sixty four arts as several proficiencies that one should possess in order to display one's capacity at accomplishments, and which endows material benefit upon its practitioners.

As a rationalist, Vātsyāyana appeals to the average citizens' power of reason in order to uphold his phenomenological and epistemological presuppositions. For instance, the use of potter wheel argument to explain the waxing and waning of pleasure cycles in a woman.[31] Similarly rational arguments are employed in part I chapter 2 to justify the applicability of *trivarga puruṣārtha*. Vātsyāyana's robust argumentation could situate him in par with the *Naiyāikas*, who upheld a rationalist theory of knowledge. Vātsyāyana too believes theory as the basis of knowledge,[32] and his moral edifice rests on an epistemological basis as it is the conscious intervention on the part of actors involved, and not merely ritualistically mimicked behaviour, that differentiates human sex from mere animal sex.

Animal sex per se is not viewed abhorrently by Vātsyāyana, for in the chapter on sexual postures[33] he vividly suggests animal patterns for postures between human partners, concluding with the final recommendation that "sexual relations can be diversified by studying the movements of domestic and wild animals, as well as insects."[34] It is well known that animals, including many from the primate species, display elaborate courting procedures and, hence, it cannot be stated with certainty that animals do not gain pleasure from their sexual acts. Yet, an inherent characteristic of confined receptivity is seen in the sexual instinct of animals, which Vātsyāyana lays down as,

Among animal species with a relatively low level of consciousness, the females, urged on by an unconscious instinct, behave according to their desire when the season arrives.[35]

As a proponenet of the holistic *puruṣārtha*, Vātsyāyana had to embody many perspectives, which would uphold the relative importance of

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[30]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.3.20-21, 56.

[31]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.1.20-21, 98.

[32]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.3.4-6, 48-49.

[33]See instances in part II chapter 6 in Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 145-158.

[34]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.6.51, 157.

[35]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.2.20, 36.

trivarga components with respect to each other. His attempt to weigh the *trivarga* components on an even scale forced him to wear many skins, and hence justifies the integrated approach of being a materialist and rationalist both at once.

8. Core Values of Sexuality and Moderation

Emphasis on core values of sexuality is the conduit through which Vātsyāyana brings together dharma, *artha* and *kāma* into the narrative of *Kāmasūtra*. This is a significant aspect in the value proposition of *trivarga*. The values of sexuality are invoked through emphases on family, love and a mature experience of sexual pleasure.

Family receives emphasis in its conjugal dimension, as that is precisely the domain of *kāma*. The onus of ensuring comfortable and congenial living quarters is placed on the husband, while the wife is made responsible to operationalize it in a sanctified manner and with dignity. On the husband's role, Vātsyāyana says,

> Having completed his studies and acquired the means of livelihood by gifts received, conquest, trade, and work, or else by inheritance, or both and, having married, the *nāgaraka* must settle down in a refined manner… He must establish himself in a big city, a town, or even a large village, near the mountains, where a decent number of persons of good society are living… [his house must have] two separate apartments, [one] on a site near water, with trees and a garden and a separate place of work.[36]

The wife, on her part, is advised to be an apostle of devotion and a stickler to organized conduct of household matters. She ought to be,

> totally trusting, considering her husband as a god and completely devoted to him… she takes responsibility of the household… attends to cleaning the clothes, tidying the rooms, flower arrangements, cleaning the floor, being attractive to look at, performing the three daily rites of offering to the gods and of worshipping them at their domestic shrine… [she behaves] suitably to her husband's elderly parents, servants, his sisters…"[37]

As the model of trust, she always seeks "her husband's permission to attend marriage ceremonies… or to go to receptions or to temples… and it is only with his approval that she takes part in games."[38]

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[36] Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.4.1-3, 57.

[37] Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 4.1.1-5, 277-278.

[38] Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 4.1.15-16, 279-280.

Emphasis on the value of pleasure can be witnessed all through part II which contains detailed preparatory procedures recommended prior to sexual union. The stress on diversity of pre-coital techniques and variety in the practices of sexual foreplay as well as coital postures underline the importance of the pleasure dimension.

The emphasis on the value of love is a resultant of all prior emphasis and its implications. Two partners bonding effectively on the platform of intimacy contain, for Vātsyāyana, an unfailing aspect of love. In that intimate moment, "he speaks to her of the wonder of love, born at their first meeting, and of the pain felt in separating… [then] they embrace and exchange passionate kisses. United by their experience, their passion grows."[39] Towards the end of fifth chapter in part II, when amorous advances have been sufficiently recounted he, in the context of couples that practice those advances persistently, asserts, "when [these partners] continue having sexual relations, or [even] live chastely together, true love never decreases, even after a hundred years."[40] Furthermore, the best emphasis on love can be witnessed in the advocacy of the *gāndharva* marriage. Of the eight types of marriages recognized traditionally in his time, Vātsyāyana is antagonistic of all but *gāndharva*, as it is only *gāndharva* that involves wilful consent of both the man and his to-be-wife. In the chapter on union by marriage Vātsyāyana concludes,

> In order of importance, the best marriage is the one in accordance with ethics… Love is the goal of the marriage union, and although the *gāndharva* marriage is not the most recommended, is remains the best… Marriage can bring many joys and sorrows. Because it is based on love, the *gāndharva* marriage is the best.[41]

The stress on informed consent on the part of both partners is such that Vātsyāyana even places *gāndharva* above the traditionally superior *brāhma* form of marriage.[42]

In addition to the above emphases, Vātsyāyana's Aristotelian attitude of taking the middle path can be viewed as a buttress to his profession of holistic *puruṣārtha*. Vātsyāyana seems to be an advocate of establishing a contextual middle ground – a fair mean between extremes – as a reasonable

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39Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.10.13, 202.

40Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.5.43, 144.

41Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 3.5.28-30, 269-270.

42For a discussion on *brahma* and other forms of marriage, see the translator's notes for chapter III part 3 in Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 217-228, and also concluding comments to chapter III part 5, 270-273.

moral directive. For instance, while focusing on the intricacies of sexual interplay between a male and female partner, he proposes a wilful mean in order to achieve a sexual union where the partners are consciously and wilfully involved, which for Vātsyāyana is the moral imperative to elevate the act from a mere animal level to a human level. To this effect, he says,

> If, out of excessive modesty, [the man] does not touch the girl, she, seeing his lack of initiative, will consider him an animal... If, on the contrary, he suddenly attacks the inexperienced girl, he will only manage to arouse fear and disgust, and she will become hostile to him.[43]

Vātsyāyana approaches matters with the attitude of moderation. He instructs that "one must not go too far in the direction of the weft of woof. Success with girls is obtained by moderation,"[44] and by doing so, "the wise predict a sure success for a man of wit with moderate behaviour, who plays only reasonable games,"[45] thus embodying an attitude that is key in fulfilling the vision of achieving a harmonious integration between components that may not be ideally complementary. In their respective extremities, each of dharma, *artha* and *kāma* can function in mutual exclusion of the rest. For instance, strict dharma, like the one enjoined for *sannyāsa*, relegates *artha* and *kāma* down to a sinful level. In order to achieve a fitting fulfilment of *gṛhsthāśrama*, extreme indulgence in any of the *trivarga* components is not befitting, and it is only reasonable that a moderate mean between those extremes is diligently arrived at.

9. Anomalies to the Holistic Approach

Though an esoteric reading of the *Kāmasūtra* reveals the subtle framework of holistic *trivarga* in its narrative, the author admits to certain instances that present a notorious, yet irrefutable, deviation to the holistic approach and, quite justifiably, cannot be overlooked. This anomaly, according to the author's interpretation, happens in three cases.

Firstly, Vātsyāyana seems to overemphasize pleasure in his attempt to render *kāma* inalienable. For instance, virile behaviour in women is advocated when "the boy, wearied after his uninterrupted sexual exercises, seeks rest and is no longer dominated by passion,"[46] and by inverting the roles, "she is determined to unite him with the instrument that she is inserting into his anus, so that he gets the taste [rasa] for one pleasure

[43]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 3.2.33-34, 237.
[44]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 3.2.31, 236.
[45]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.4.39, 73.
[46]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.8.1, 168.

[rata] after another..."[47] Secondly, Vātsyāyana seemingly in his nature as a realist propounds injunctions whose morality carries problematic shades. For instance, a man having many wives is instructed to "treat them [all] equally. He may not neglect some and put up with the short-comings of others,"[48] thus highlighting a possible acceptance of polygamy by Vātsyāyana. To the man, he permits sexual relations with widows and courtesans, when done for the sake of pleasure alone,[49] and to the women, he counsels marrying a man out of love for his money, and not for his qualities, appearances or abilities.[50] Furthermore, a courtesan is instructed to look for gaining both money and pleasure from a man,[51] insinuating that Vātsyāyana was in support of sensual and material exploitation. The entire part V describes procedures for gaining another man's wife, thus hinting at Vātsyāyana's advocacy towards licentiousness. Thirdly, Vātsyāyana seems to favour subjugation of female freedom to her male as well as family priorities, especially in his injunctions towards duties of the wife:

> In her relations with her father-in-law and mother-in-law, [the wife] must be submissive and not contradict them... she must not get excited at amusements and games... never give anything without her husband's knowledge... when her husband departs on a journey abroad, she removes the married woman's marks and her jewels, dedicates herself to devotion, and looks after the house according to the rules established by her husband... she does not go to visit her own family, except in the case of sickness or for religious festivals, and always accompanied by someone of her husband's family as witness to the purity of her trip.[52]

The above instances alienate Vātsyāyana from his holistic sexual moral approach; drawing unto him a blanket of hedonistic, amorally realistic and anti-feministic personality. Yet, in defence of the author's reading of the holistic *trivarga* message, it should be understood that a treatise on morality would be grossly incomplete if it stuck to idealistic situations and ignored the profligacy of everyday life. A frank admission of imbalances and transgressions prevalent in society could be viewed as a sincere attempt to create awareness, rather than the advocacy of it. The author

[47]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 2.8.4, 169.
[48]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 4.2.67, 301.
[49]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 1.5.2, 75.
[50]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 3.4.49-53, 259.
[51]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 6.1.1-6, 391-392.
[52]Vātsyāyana, *The Complete Kāma Sūtra*, 4.1.37-45, 283-284.

speculates that varied western interpretations of the ancient text could have introduced splintering anomalies in its narrative, and conscientiously relegates its confirmation to further scholarly reading by audience of this passage.

10. Conclusion

Vātsyāyana's defence of *kāma*, insofar as he strives to highlight its necessary nature in fulfilment of the *puruṣārthas*, may lead one to hastily conclude that he stands at loggerheads with authorities that condone *kāma*, in its nature of sexual or sensual desire, for its unethical implications. It would be a gross misunderstanding to situate *Kāmasūtra* in opposition to moral treatises. Vātsyāyana's constant effort throughout *Kāmasūtra*, explicitly in the beginning and implicitly later on, is to assuage one's temperament towards pleasure (*kāma*) and its material ramifications (*artha*) in order to contain it in the subtle channel of moral boundaries (dharma). Vātsyāyana does not try to subvert morality for the sake of carnal pleasure, which is what calling it merely a sex manual makes it look like; rather he attempts to refocus morality in the perspective of societal life and reinstate it in the domain of everyday living. Kāmasūtra is the work of a moral teacher with a social mindset that upholds a set of cardinal virtues in the form of the *trivarga*; and in which, dharma, like Platonic justice, stands as the overarching virtue, governing the practicability of the other two virtues of communal life, *kāma* and *artha*. In this respect, *Kāmasūtra* is not merely a *sūtra* on *kāma* – a text that would solely focus on enhancing sexual pleasure – rather it is *kāma-dharma-śāstra*, in being a treatise that aims to achieve a subtle balance between enjoyment of sensual and material pleasure along moral lines.

Kāmasūtra manages to deftly achieve that delicate balance in its treatment of sexuality, through an esoteric and material emphasis on pleasure on the one side and its practise within moral boundaries on the other. Treatises on sexuality have often diverted from this endeavour, for instance, poetics like Ratirahasya and Anañgarañga, end up eulogizing and romanticising sexuality in its sensual experience with morality taking a backseat, while moral discourses like the *Dharma Śāstrās* bear a puritanical mindset resorting to injunctions that bear the flavour of a Victorian inhibition towards sensual pleasure. *Kāmasūtra's* morality is not prohibitive; rather it is participative and holistically inclined. Moreover, it is directed towards the societal beings who not only form the significant chunk of human population but also a section prone to moral detractions.

Vātsyāyana's outlook is definitive, insofar as he never loses sight of his moral direction, while his insight is systemic, in that he takes an all-inclusive view of sexuality in all its applicable scenarios and modalities.

In spite of the rich cultural expositions through discourses in historical machinery and the variety of experiences over centuries of human experience, we continue to witness ambivalence in the area of sexuality, insofar as our sexual attitudes are concerned. On the one hand are conservative societies that view sex as taboo, and hence table raging debates to curb and discipline sexual profanities and perversities, while on the other is the harsh reality of escalating sexual transgression and ever increasing hankering for sexual gratification through the avenue of pornography.[53] A similar picture of ambivalence can also be derived from Foucault's dichotomous view of historical discourses in sexuality – seen sometimes as *ars erotica* and sometimes as *scientia sexualis*.[54] Sexuality is the avenue for humans to seek a pervading oneness in their own being along with a harmonizing unity with another. A spiritual experience of sexual pleasure is an avenue to reach the promised land of sexual (and seemingly spiritual) bliss. *Kāmasūtra*'s emphasis on a systematic and ethical experience of sexual pleasure should be taken as a conduit to enhance and emancipate the sexuality in human beings, thus guiding its followers towards improving their self-image, insofar as it is influenced by sexuality, and in turn serving and preserving the fabric of an equitable and balanced society. It is in order to achieve this goal that Kāmasūtra was necessary for its times, as much as it is still relevant in the present day society.

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[53]For a brief discussion on statistics related to the prevalence of pornography and further links, see Saju Chackalackal, Editorial: "Sex and Religion: Contemporary Responses," *Journal of Dharma* 34, 1 (January-March 2009), 3-18, 5.

[54]For detailed reading see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1: *The Will to Knowledge*, trans. Robert Hurley. Victoria: Penguin Group (Australia), 2008, 57-69.

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THE SECULAR ETHIC AND THE PITFALLS OF V. S. NAIPUAL'S NON-FICTION

Etienne Rassendren ♦

1. Introduction

So what then are the inter-relations between literature, ethics and the secular in contemporary cultural practice? And how does V. S. Naipaul's non-fiction fail in terms of the secular-ethic, proposed by the inter-relations between the literary, the secular and the ethical? Any response to the above questions will depend on a) the way one conceptualizes the literary, the ethical and the secular and b) reading Naipaul in and through the matrix of the secular-ethic as cultural practice. Hence what I propose to do in this article is to divide the debates into three parts: the first will discuss the varied conceptions of the literary and its tensions with the secular and the ethical; the second will demonstrate by exposition as evidence – not by argument but by narrative – the pitfalls of Naipaul's writing with regard to the secular-ethic; and the third will argue by way of conclusion that Naipaul's writing is ideologically islamophobic bearing distortions of history, based on an overwhelming anti-Islamic discourse, which then makes his writing unjust and anti-secular. My argument rests in the first and third parts, while the second will bear the evidence of the same. My method here combines Michel Foucault's exposition of discursive power and Antonio Gramsci's explanation of hegemonic violence. My reading of Naipaul as a result will be "contrapuntal"[1] in nature, and will expose Naipaul's ideological pitfalls and biases as an explanation of his Islamophobia.

2. The Literary, the Secular and the Ethical

Literature through time has had a rather tentative, if uneasy relation with both the secular and the ethical. Today, the field is in dialectical relations with questions of free speech. While many suggest that all societies must permit free expression of views and ideas, including hate speech, others

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[1]Geeta Chowdry, "Edward Said and Contrapuntal Reading: Implications for Critical Interventions in International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, 1 (December 2007), 101-116.

claim that free speech must constrain irresponsible and instigating discourse through processes of self-censorship. The controversies that surrounded the Salman Rushdie affair demonstrate how the self-censorship perspective, though dissenting with the Islamic fatwa, acknowledged the failure of judicious choice in Rushdie's writing.

I wish to historicize at this juncture the arrival of enlightenment and modernity in the 19^{th} century as the cultural location that marks a paradigm shift in the tension between the literary and the ethical on the one hand and the secular and the religious on the other. Literature in the period of European enlightenment was perceived as universal and retained the idea of moral force as against the free expression of interests and intentions. Literature though replacing the moral teaching of religious theology because of the onset of the secular as idea and practice, was no longer mimetic in the Aristotelian sense; and when holding the mirror up to nature could neither identify nor purge the errors of society; by contrast it formed the instrument, the signpost, and the ethical underpinning by which the social fabric would be guided into humanist culture. Thus the humanist ideal, equal and fair, formed the ethical core of the literary and the literature of enlightenment projected values of humanism, namely reason, rights and individuality as the moral substance of literary thought and action.

The enlightenment was, however, accompanied by the arrogance of capital and colony. The Eurocentricism of colonial nations, particularly that of England, India's ex-colonial power, imposed an humanistic ethic onto an assumedly uncivilized society in India through the institution of English literary studies. Such an imposition altered the nature of the moral high ground of literary humanism. What was liberatory in its idealism became in practice an instrument of imperial hegemony and power in the Gramscian sense, for literature was structured as an institution in order to subjugate rather than liberate. What was perceived as the achievement of universal morality ended up being an act of colonial repression. Hence the so-called literary ethic turned into an immoral, anti-people pretext that subjugated a free people. However as a complex cultural back-loop it provided marginalized and subjugated people the instruments of anti-colonial resistance and cultural and social transformation.

In the anti-colonial period much literature was mixed up with the religious as even oppositional Indian-English texts against colony were predominantly inflected by Hindu ideas. This local language and anti-colonial English resistance literature was highly sanskritized, sometimes deeply anti-dalit and gruesomely anti-minority. Bankim Chandra

Chatterjee's "Anandamath" (1882), a deeply anti-secular novel, stands as an example. It clearly targeted Islam, rather than Britain, and called for a Hindu nationalism, based on what Etienne Balibar called a single "fictive ethnicity."[2] But the emerging Indian nation in its birth was profoundly mixed in character; and as Said posits, its peoples were but "[H]uman agglomerations,"[3] loosely stitched together with imagined histories and cultures, but "mixed"[4] as cultural communities. No single race or history or character could define India as nation. In fact no nation, today in the world could do so either. All nations are in fact multiple, as the UN remarks, in its nation-defining documents;[5] which propose therefore redefinitions of the literary, the ethical and the secular in the current context. Consequently one revisits these terms in their origin to conceptualize for this article the prism of reading for Naipaul's writing.

There is no more anything like literature at all. Instead what is called literature is but social practice, a whole way of seeing the world,[6] a representation of experience, a terrain of meaning-production. Hence literature as representation carries either a productive social consciousness or a failed ideology. Hence as social practice, literary texts are either underpinned by the secular consciousness or religious ideology; which is why one emphasises that the secular, could not dislodge religion from the social system completely. Belief and its differing practices functioned variously within social spheres and inflected literary representations. Literature turned into being the handmaiden of cultural hegemony; and it invoked custom and ritual and recast religious values and practices as cultural forms. Revisit here, any early Indian-English text and, notice, such recasting of religious values easily. Be it, Tagore's "Gitanjali" (1910), deeply inflected by Hindu Bhakti traditions or U. R. Ananthamurthy's "Samskara" (1965) – a critique of caste ideologies, no doubt, but only an insider-critique and perceived as modernist India's literary texts – they nevertheless take recourse in Hindu traditions, as if Hinduism marks Indianness in the 1900's. In the British imperium yet, almost parallel to our

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[2]Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism" in *Race, Nations, Classes: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, London: Verso, 1994, 49.

[3]Edward Said, "An Ideology of Difference" in *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994*, London: Vintage, 1995, 81.

[4]Said, "An Ideology of Difference," 81.

[5]Said, "An Ideology of Difference," 81.

[6]Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, New York: Encore Editions, 1985, 55.

Indian-English experience, the highly Victorian ideal of Universal humanism, which was rather a skewed Protestant Christian morality and a bourgeois ethic, chose to become orientalist, both in what it chose to study or translate in India. Such practice was aimed at confining literary texts as only an instrument of civilizational power. Hence it valorised almost irresponsibly other literary texts as inferior to theirs, thus creating an unethical contrast between its own representation in the literary and others elsewhere. With the arrival of post-modernity and later cultural studies, things changed. The literary was but a field in which reading constituted meanings and hence all meanings thereby emerging were inflected by the ideology of either the dominant centre or the silenced margins. Besides, the literary could exist only as an inter-site, a cultural and linguistic space from which multiple meanings, differing ethics and equally varied self-perceptions, emanate.[7] Thus to mark in the ethical and the secular within the literary is a deliberate effort; to ignore them as insignificant and insufficient would be failure; as the former may produce a social practice of equality and justice, while the latter, a severe fascist right-wing oppression.

The inenumerable[8] nature of our communities as nations today necessitates a plural orientation to the *secular* which may have to be written into the literary assiduously. Since nations and their societies are plural, only the plural as secular is workable both as literary representation and as cultural practice. Consequently, *cultural syncretism* becomes the productive paradigm for literary texts as social practice in the current context. This implies that religio-cultural ideas are not abrogated, but are given equal and fair representation within a particular literary text.

The secular has been defined as a) the abrogation of all the religious expression from every public activity (Post-Christian Europe and Canada), b) *sarva-dhrama-samabhavana*, the play and celebration of all religious communitarian activities in the public sphere (India in particular) and c) the incorporation of religious principles as secular values (nations in Eastern Europe and the Americas). But these perspectives are to be read in relation with far deeper questions of identity, community and nationality and should not notoriously gloss over social custom and hierarchy. Since Literature as social practice is integral to identity formation, the meaning

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[7]Aniket Jaaware, *Simplifications: An Introduction to Structuralism and Post-Structuralism*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2001.

[8]Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India" in *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, ed., Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey, New Delhi: OUP, 1993, 40-68.

of the *secular* in literary texts depends entirely on its contemporary social function. In the Indian context, the abrogation of all faiths cannot be carried out as the underlying consciousness of any literary text because of India's multi-religious tendency and its rather belief-based culture; a celebratory plural ambivalence, within the inter-site of the literary and the social can project plural identity formations within literature as social practice; it can provide *minority-reassurance*, integral to the social function of secularism in cultural politics[9] today. Hence the projection of a syncretic culture and the assurance of minorities would form the ethic by which literary texts shall represent its consciousness.

The ethical then in literature is drawn from the dialectics between two associated Greek concepts, namely *ethos and ethnos*, the former meaning character and aspiration of a *people* and the latter, the *race or nation.*[10] The ethical is different from the ethnic as, if nation is emphasized more than people, the ethic and the ethnic – that is the spirit and beliefs of a people and the nature and structure of community respectively – will remain in conflict with each other. While ethos implies consent of a people to their norm of social contract and morality, ethnos concerns questions of ancestry, origin and history, which could turn anti-moral and unequal. Hence the notion of ethics is "the science of morals"[11] and emerges out of a dynamic, constantly re-inventing, resolution between ethos and ethnos.

Cultures develop norms and prohibitions that include reason and rights as invaluable social ethics freed from religious complicity as well. Jawaharlal Nehru,[12] in particular, interpreted this paradigm for the Indian context, when promoting the scientific temper in thought and action. The celebration of varied beliefs, with a preferential assurance to minorities, rather than a brute mobilizations of majorities,[13]written into the production of a cultural norm of equal consent constitutes the secular ethic in Literature. Thus the secular ethic in literature rests on three major aspects: a) the enfranchisement of the

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[9]Anuradha Dingwaney and Sunder Rajan, "Introduction" in *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, eds., Anuradha Dingwaney, Sunder Rajan, and Rajeswari New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, 1-42.

[10]Christopher Miller, "Theories of Africans: The Question of Literary Anthropology," *Critical Inquiry* 13, 1 (Autum 1986), 120-139.

[11]Miller, "Theories of Africans," 120-139.

[12]Sunil Khilnani, "Nehru's Faith" in Anuradha Dingwaney and Sunder Rajan, eds., *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, Ranikhet/ New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, 89-103.

[13]Partha Chatterjee, "The Contradictions of Secularism" in *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, 155.

minorities,[14] through wide-ranging literary texts as social representation, b) the projection of a social consciousness through the literary that insists on the inescapability of 'difference'[15] and above all c) the quest for 'good faith,'[16] which means the equal and distributed representation of the marginalized and the minority in literary texts. It is precisely from this matrix of literature and the secular-ethic that I wish to read and engage with Naipaul's Non-fiction in order to explain its pitfalls.

3. V. S. Naipaul: A Brief Profile

V. S. Naipaul, born in Trinidad of Indian parentage, received the Nobel Prize for literature in 2001, almost serendipitously soon after 9/11, with the Nobel citation praising him for "his analysis of the Islamic world."[17] While Naipaul illuminates the complexity of living between homeland and migrancy in his fiction, he is notorious for his "islamophobic assumptions"[18] in his Non-fiction. His narratives mourn "a wounded civilization," namely "Hindu India," destroyed, as it were, by medieval Islamic invasion.[19] Naipaul carries a vastly faulty view of history which is further clouded by his equally facile perspective of Islam as a religion and culture of aggression and violence.[20] His literary vision, if any, as social practice lacks a secular-ethic, for while it claims to be objective and equal, is "fraught with serious misunderstandings"[21] about Islam. But Naipaul wills this misunderstanding, distorting history in order to install this bias as narrative truth and fails to correct it, providing no space for an alternative representation of Islam. Yet Naipaul has received praise for his "moral integrity," "fearless truth-telling" and "new levels of understanding Islam."[22] Perhaps this is so because it is symmetrical with an overwhelming anti-Islamic rhetoric all over the Euro-American world. For example, Ninan Koshy in his *The War on Terror: Re-ordering the World* explores the infamous Huntington thesis, quoting the following: "the clash

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[14]Dingwaney and Rajan, "Introduction," 2-4.

[15]Said, "An Ideology of Difference," 81.

[16]Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness,'" *Massachusetts Review*, 18 (1977), 782-794.

[17]William Dalrymple, "Trapped in the Ruins," *The Guardian*, 20 March 2004, 4.

[18]Dalrymple, "Trapped in the Ruins," 4.

[19]Dalrymple, "Trapped in the Ruins," 4.

[20]Dalrymple, "Trapped in the Ruins," 4.

[21]Al-Quaderi Golam Gaus and Habibullah Md "Travels in Absurdity: Islam and V. S. Naipaul" *Journal of Postcolonial Cultures and Societies* 3, 1 (2001), 23.

[22]Al-Quaderi, "Travels in Absurdity," 22.

of civilization will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines between nations... Contemporary global politics is the age of Muslim wars... The Age of Muslim wars had come home to America..." Koshy shows through his book how the conceptions of Islam and terrorism were sparked by the hegemony of Huntington's view across Europe and America. Huntington repeatedly articulated it through 2000 and 2003 in articles in Newsweek and other public fora,[23] and his work is influential in shaping the American policy on the Middle East. It silenced paradoxically even the most vocal radical Islamic critique against Islamic fanaticism and absolutism[24] because such critique faulted American hegemony as well. This might sound like naiveté but is true. As Said points out: "much dominant anti-Islamic discourse was unnuanced and was based on "downright ignorance." It turned a "horrendous pathologically motivated suicide attack ... into a proof of Huntington's theses."[25] Bernard Lewis, another famous orientalist thinker, also echoed this perspective of Islam as violent and filled with rage.[26] Naipaul, I argue, belongs to this long line of islamophobes, largely because, despite his reductive tendency, he won praise, not from alternative thinkers like Edward Said but from mainstream ones. Thus, the politics of ideology in literature with its many serious failings and consequences does affect writing about peoples and places. Such cultural politics in literature as social practice is what constitutes an anti-Islamic cultural geography; Naipaul's non-fiction, which attempts to configure Islam, its people and its places, is one such cultural geography.

Before I progress into providing evidence of Islamophobia, let me define the same: Islamophobia is the fear of Islam, as represented by thinkers such as Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington. It characterizes Islam as necessarily irreconcilable with enlightenment and modernity and uses intellectual reductiveness and cultural stereotyping to establish Islam's presumed barbarity and ignorance. It claims rhetorically that Islam by its nature is violent and bloody, given to differing oppressive structures and repressive regimes of power.

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[23]Huntington quoted in Ninan Koshy, *September Eleven: The War on Terror: Reordering the World*, New Delhi: Leftword Books, 2003, 21-22.

[24]Koshy, *September Eleven*, 23.

[25]Edward Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation* 2 October 2001, 1. <www.thenation./ article/clash-ignorance> (9 March 2013); also Koshy, *September Eleven*, 23.

[26]Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," 1.

4. Naipaul's Darkness: His View of Islam in India

I begin my evidence here with Naipaul's earliest non-fictional account about India in his *An Area of Darkness* (1964). India is his own experience of "darkness." It "extended to the land"… "though for a little way around" offered some "light"[27] after all. His India remains a vague background that makes him culturally Hindu, without beliefs but with strong caste attitudes, that include food taboos,[28] ritualistic adherences and a mortal dislike and fear of Muslims.[29] In an interview with Taru Tejpal in 1999, Naipaul speaks about India with a culture of "a defeated people." Its "period of darkness,"[30] namely Muslim conquest, was not about Islamic "arriving"[31] but historical devastation. He argues, "They [Muslims] speak of the triumph of the faith, the destruction of idols and temples, the loot, the carting away of the local people as slaves, so cheap and numerous that they were being sold for a few rupees."[32] Naipaul's overt socialized distrust for Muslims as represented in his non-fiction links to his public opinion in Tarun Tejpal's interview about Islam and its conquerors provides proofs of a skewed fear of Islam and its people.

The image of the Muslim developed through *An Area of Darkness* projects an ideological, loathing for everything Islamic, that India and its history could offer. It is Hindu India's diasporic socialization in Trinidad that marks the dominant perception that "… Muslims were somewhat more different than others. They were not to be trusted; they would always do you down..."[33] Within the book, however, Naipaul provides no reason except the melodrama of customary Hindu upbringing[34] for sensing such a threat. His quest for his India, organizes in memory more 'the pleasing piece of theatre' of caste, in 'the thread ceremony of the new born' and the 'garb of a Hindu-mendicant scholar' with all its caste-fervour than any studied knowledge of Hindu thought or history. Notice how Naipaul's own cultural loss in migration inaugurates his representation of the writer's self in his quest for India's ancient cultural history.

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[27]V. S. Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, London: Picador, 1964, 27.

[28]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 28.

[29]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 28.

[30]Tarun Tejpal, "Christian Didn't Damage India Like Islam: Interview with V. S. Naipaul," *Outlook India* (15 Nov 1999), 1-5.

[31]Tejpal, "Interview with V. S. Naipaul," 1-5.

[32]Tejpal, "Interview with V. S. Naipaul," 1-5.

[33]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 28.

[34]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 29.

This narrative of mourning bearing much cultural baggage of Indian-Hindu social divisions leads to the perceptions that all Islamic people are a "threat."[35] They cause fear and corrupt Hindu culture. Naipaul's views on Islam through his text are deeply marked by his fear of Islamic food[36] and depended on a highly ritualized caste-order that expressed itself through food taboos, if not through religious belief: "food was one thing and caste was the other."[37] For Naipaul, although caste in Trinidad was imperceptible, caste later began to represent "latent qualities,"[38] which in time became "attractive and touching."[39] Hence for Naipaul, the fear of Islam was determined by difference in custom, not by belief, which indirectly fed and fostered his prejudices about the 'other,' namely the Muslim. This anxiety over Islam and his loss of India are dependent on the functioning of caste practices, without religious belief, thus making his fear cultural, not religious, as customary practices mark the difference.

Another aspect of his anti-Islamic prejudice concerns his configuring and refiguring Islamic people in India. Kashmiri Muslims, for Naipaul, preserve an empty, inane laziness,[40] punctuated by momentary lapses into sexual indulgences of Muslim dancing girls for sale.[41] That apart, they seem to represent a cruelty that to him is abhorrent. Notice his damming criticism of his guide and companion, as a cruel and bloodthirsty jihadi: "… his history only began with his conquerors; in spite of travel and degrees he remained a medieval convert, forever engaged in the holy war."[42]

His next depiction is of places as Islamic spaces. "Kashmir was coolness and colour… it was dust in sunlight," filled with small hills and large mountains, unceremoniously opening to the "disorder in the bazzar" and smelling of "months-old dirt and human excrement."[43] This description is juxtaposed with frightful characterizations of Islamic men with "ferocious beards," praying and blessing before going away to Mecca. This juxtaposition is pathetic fallacy that Naipaul performs, in his non-fiction which imposes upon the natural world an eeriness that bears

[35]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 28.
[36]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 29.
[37]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 31.
[38]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 32.
[39]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 33.
[40]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 132.
[41]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 131.
[42]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 158.
[43]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 114-115.

the writer's subjectivity. Then there is the reference to the Pandava fort in the ruins at Srinagar[44] juxtaposed rather efficiently in advance with refiguring converted Islamic people as lacking memory of Hindu ancestry,[45] as represented by his Islamic attendant and companion.

Naipaul then shifts to depicting Northern India as a civilization destroyed by Islamic conquest; "mosque over temple: ruin on ruin" suggesting the destiny of ancient but vulnerable[46] Hindu India. He then makes his most rabid indictment of the Taj Mahal: "... a building wastefully without function; it is only a despot's monument to a woman, not of India, who bore a child every year for fifteen years."[47]

Accompanied by reflections on Mogul 'plunder,' 'personal despotism' and 'oppressive' rule, Naipaul's resentment of Islamic invasion apparently reduces Islamic art, architecture, even the romance and its rulers into cultural stereotypes of violence. Other thinkers, including William Dalrymple, a scholar of Islamic India and a popular novelist, observe differently. While Islamic conquest was real to the Hindu Kingdoms of Medieval India, the destruction of temples and their replacement with mosques were often political choices not religious ones. They were often done to quell revolt; much destruction was caused by neighbouring unruly Hindu rulers as well. Besides, the dialogue between religions did alter the way both Hindu and Islamic rulers viewed themselves. As rulers, some Hindu kings called themselves 'sultans' and appeared in exotically Islamized attire in public; much art too thrived in a kind of Islamic-Hindu syncretism.[48]

Naipaul's unjustified confusion with history thus displaces subjective prejudice as objective history, distorting in the process all history. The distortions act as premises for Naipaul's stereotypes of Islamic people in India, embedded in Naipaul's Islamophobia. Re-writing history is essential but it cannot employ ideological distortions to foster communal intolerance. Shahid Amin, the Subaltern studies historian, discusses such re-writing in his "On Re-telling the Muslim Conquest of North India."[49]

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[44]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 175.

[45]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 158.

[46]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 255.

[47]Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness*, 258.

[48]See, Dalyrmple, "Trapped," *The Guardian* 20 March 2004, 4.

[49]Shahid Amin, "On Retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India," in *History and the Present*, eds., Chaterejee Partha and Ghosh Anjan, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006, 24-44.

He writes about warrior-saints particularly Ghazi Miya, the nephew of the plunderer, Mohamed Ghazini, and Hindu nationalism's worst villain. Unlike his uncle, Ghazi Miya is celebrated as a saviour of cowherds against the plundering by their own Hindu king, Raja Sohal Deo, a cruel ruler who destroyed the Yadava tribal community. In the deep districts near Benares, this Miya is a highly adored Sufi Sant to whom all go to pray for succour and salvation.[50] Such re-writing while never condoning Islamic conquest provides alternative views of syncretic Indian history. Naipaul's writing does not contribute to such understanding of history.

5. Naipaul's Wounding of Civilization

Naipaul returns to India in the 1970's during the political unrest in the emergency. He calls this time in his *India: A Wounded Civilization* "the depth of an Indian tragedy."[51] It is an India of "decadent Gandhianism" that hungers for political power, with a "censored press" and "secret arrests."[52] Neither the political activist nor the government differs from each other in their ideological orientations. He debunks the marriage between Marxism and Gandhianism,[53] proposed and mobilized by Jaya Prakash Narayan, as his hope lies in "an India essentially returned to itself: a vision of Ramraj."[54] With a critique of Gandhi, Naipaul's tongue-in-cheek commentary, ironical and mournful,[55] transforms his anti-Islamic discourses into analytical history, when he compares his representation of Ramraj with that of India's Islamic cultural history: "And India is again at the periphery of this new Arabian world … when the new religion of Islam spread in all directions and the Arabs … overran the Indian kingdom of Sind … India has shrunk since the Arab incursion."[56]

For Naipaul, then the failure of Ramraj is determined by the Islamic conquest of the medieval period. For him, that failure in Indian history culminates in the 1970's tyranny of the emergency. Indeed for him, "Five hundred years after the Arab conquest of Sind Moslem rule was established in Delhi as the rule of foreigners, people apart; and foreign rule – Moslem for the first five hundred years, British for the last 150 – ended

[50]Amin, "On Retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India," 37.
[51]V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, London: Picador, 1979, 126.
[52]Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, 127-128
[53]Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, 134-135.
[54]Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, 136.
[55]Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, 139.
[56]V. S. Naipaul, "Foreword" in *India: A Wounded Civilization*, ix.

in Delhi only in 1947."[57] Yet India remained truly vulnerable, despite the euphoria of the early Indian Republic. But soon the hunger for power by Indian patriots destroyed the hope of Ramraj, which then ended in despotic rule in the emergency. He writes: "...independence meant more than going away of the British; that the India to which Independence came was a land of far older defeat" – referring to Islamic conquest – and that the emergency was a "chilling sense of a new dissolution" – suggesting that the civilization's defeat culminated in the emergency.[58]

What makes this representation erratic is the premise of his claim, namely that "Indian history telescopes easily,"[59] into one long night of conquest. To telescope Indian history would be anti-historical, as short-changing complexity would invite distortions. As the narrative progresses, Naipaul suggests that India as a modern nation has become too weak to resist or overcome the conquest of Islam. To him, India seems trapped in the feudal Islamic past and within the malaise of Islam today. Somehow all Islamic people are squalid, simply surplus and regressive – to summarise his "Foreword" to this book.[60]

6. Ramraj: Naipual's Fascination

To Naipaul, Ramraj is a powerful cultural-political alternative to such a malaise. He returns to India with greater vigour in *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, the third book in his trilogy. Naipaul now praises Ramaraj's current alienating ideological project, now integral to right-wing Hindutva discourses when he argues: "to be ruled by Ram's law is to know bliss."[61] No small wonder then that Naipaul visits the BJP offices and valorises the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya.[62] He calls it a "passion."[63]

But worse still is his propensity to draw artificial cultural boundaries between the so-called North and South India. As in his earlier works, Naipaul positions the Vijayanagara Empire of the South against a more decadent, inescapably luxurious and highly violent Delhi Sultanate. The southern empire remains in his imagination the last bastion of Hindu rule, which fought marauding Muslim conquerors that presumably destroyed Hindu civilization. But Naipaul's imagination, as Dalrymple suggests, is

[57]Naipaul, "Foreword," ix-x.
[58]Naipaul, "Foreword," x.
[59]Naipaul, "Foreword," x.
[60]Naipaul, "Foreword," x.
[61]V. S. Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, London: Vintage, 1991, 181.
[62]Dalrymple, "Trapped," 4.
[63]Dalrymple, "Trapped," 4.

orientalist, informed by imperial Britain, than by enabling historical research.[64] Recent studies, Dalrymple argues, indicate that Vijayanagara was actually "Islamicised" and its Hindu kings borrowed much statecraft from Islamic rulers. According to Dalrymple,

> Far from being the stagnant, backward-looking bastion of Hindu resistance imagined by Naipaul, Vijayanagar had in fact developed in all sorts of unexpected ways, adapting many of the administrative, tax collecting and military methods of the Muslim sultanates that surrounded it – notably stirrups, horse-shoes, horse armour and a new type of saddle, all of which allowed Vijayanagar to put into the field an army of horse archers who could hold at bay the Delhi Sultanate, then the most powerful force in India.[65]

Dalrymple's argument rests on what the historian Wagoner cites in his work and echoes the perspectives Shahid Amin refers to about Hindu-Islamic hybridity. It is because Naipaul telescopes history, erases some of its uncertainties and rejects recording nuances, that his narrative becomes tautological. Naipaul's history falsifies much and lacks credibility. It is his tautology that makes his writing Islamophobic, failing to provide equal and fair representation to Islam and Hinduism, thus faulting in the realization of a secular ethic.

8. Naipaul's Believers

Naipaul's Islamophobia becomes untenable, even absolutely ridiculous, when he writes about South Asia and West Asia. True, much of South Asia and West Asia, particularly Iran, Indonesia and Pakistan are apparent theocracies or semi-theocratic democracies. Notice how he describes conversion as the reason for such violent nations: "People develop fantasies about who and what they are; and in the Islam of converted countries there is an element of neurosis and nihilism. These countries can be easy set on the boil."[66] He knows that these conversions could be perceived as "crossover from old beliefs." He is sympathetic to Christianity but not Islam as the continued crossing over is "extra drama ... like a cultural big bang,"[67] implying its violence and radical change-over. Naipaul however appears to love Christian nations, as he says so with no nihilistic faulting here in his

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[64]Dalrymple, "Trapped."4

[65]Dalrymple, "Trapped."4

[66]V. S. Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998, 1.

[67]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 2-3.

discourse.[68] When Naipaul pillories the Asian nations, he has clearly shifted his episteme, from his radical anti-imperial stance to an imperialized one, re-enacting Huntington's "clash of civilization."[69]

In *Among the Believers* (1981) Naipaul's central argument suggests that Islamic communities have woken from "medieval culture" to the prospect of "oil and money" and to a "great new civilization" that they both "reject and depend on."[70] Since much critique has prevailed over *Among the Believers*, suffices it here to argue that Naipaul's perspectives are ethno-centric, making Islam out to be anti-modern, violent and dehumanizing. As we move into *Beyond Belief* (1995) these attitudes are whetted further. Ten years after his initial visit to these regions, Naipaul re-installs his Islamophobic vision as he provides unsubstantiated "opinions," while re-figuring himself as a world-citizen, travelling the world, writing about peoples and transcribing their voices.[71] He claims these are "narratives," where only people speak, not the writer. Yet hiding behind literary conventions, he cheats readers with a false sense of objectivity, while he historicizes Islamic people through his jaundiced and prejudiced intellectual prism. The "Prologue" to his narrative explains: "This is a book about people. It is not a book of opinions." But consider a few lines later the interpretation: "A convert's world view alters... He rejects his own;" he becomes, whether he likes it or not, a part of the Arab story."[72] This is opinion, indeed and is determined by the teleology of anxiety, where the end justifies the claim. South East Asia may have Islamized but have they Arabized? Hence it is his internal "anxiety," bordering on "disgust" over highly modernized Islamic people, that prefers vulgar moralizing to cultural complexity, condemning Indonesian Muslims as un-Islamic.[73]

Beyond Belief (1995) begins in Indonesia in Naipaul's encounter with 'Imaduddin,' former exile, and political dissident, now a leading scientist for the new technology mission in Indonesia. This scientist

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[68]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 2.

[69]Akeel Bilgrmai, "Occidentalism, the Very Idea: An Essay on the Enlightenment and Enchantment," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, 33 (19-25 August 2006), 3591-3603.

[70]Edward Said, *Reflections in Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, New Delhi: Penguin Books 2011, 114.

[71]Wendy O'Shea Meddour, "Gothic Horror and Muslim Madness: in V. S. Naipaul's *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21, 1 (2005), 59.

[72]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 1.

[73]O'Shea Meddour, "Gothic Horror and Muslim Madness," 59.

visualizes a modern and self-sufficient Indonesia. Naipaul wrangles with the quiet ability of the man to conjoin Islam with modernity. And after mushy parsimonious narrative, the final Islamophobic insight appears: "The ambition was stupendous: to complete the Islamic take-over of this part of the world, and to take the islands to their destiny as the leader of Islamic revival in the twenty-first century."[74]

O'Shea Meddour argues that Naipaul's Gothic horror mode is responsible for his reactionary behaviour.[75] But it is Naipaul's intense desire to condemn Islam itself that shows up. True, despots and their cohorts are megalomaniac, but to suggest that all Islam can only produce despotism is blatantly irresponsible. It is precisely such subtle but intentional misrepresentations, veiled, clever attacks on a people and a religion that produces what Achebe calls the lack of good faith.[76] There are enough sustained critiques of Indonesian tyrannies to prove that power-hungry military men can destroy otherwise truly democratic states or nations. But Naipaul's claims are different; he merely displaces his crude views of Islamic conquest in India onto Indonesian peoples and their society.

His horror over Islam and his tautological intent, squaring all to one source and in this case, the violence of Islam, narrates the gendered struggles for a free press that a woman's magazine endures. Naipaul's main narrative rarely exposes his uncritical arrogance. It is the narrative slippage, the marginal generalization, often tucked away, that features his anti-Islamic prejudice.

> Things were now more clouded; traditionalism and pragmatism had different associations. The changes that had come to the limited colonial society after twenty years of independence ... had made a woman's magazine possible... But now religion, the stresses of the half-converted country, and the great new wealth, had given an unexpectedly backward twist to things.[77]

His conviction that converted peoples are more backward than others mars the narrative potential of a travel writer. All this civilizational rhetoric is explained by his mourning of colonialism, Muslim invasion and the fall of Hindu India: "So while Islam was arrested in the west, in the east it was spreading over the cultural-religious remains of greater India. India has

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[74]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 24.

[75]O'Shea Meddour, "Gothic Horror and Muslim Madness," 62.

[76]Chiuna Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness,'" *Massachusetts Review*, 18 (1977), 782-794.

[77]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 108.

been ravaged by centuries of Muslim invasion…"[78] Naipaul extends his argument about Muslim Conquest by referring to Java earlier as the "last Hindu empire"[79] and the conversion of "Kali Jaga." The Hindu empire fell in 1478; the greater India, he refers to, is "put out."[80] He then associates Kali Jaga with the "Hindu-Jain saint, Gomateshwara."[81] Notice the conflations between Hinduism, Islam and Jainism here and the telescoping of history again. This historicity narrates the notion of greater Hindustan, that neither modern India, nor modern Indonesia can provide any argument or value for. It is in this respect that the mourning here becomes ridiculously over-stated, "dilettante,"[82] uncouth, and ill-equipped.

With Iran, the narrative becomes different and it appears sober, but deteriorates beyond redemption when he describes Mohurram "Shia mourning month as "the blood month."[83] The violence returns with debilitating candour, when Khalkhalli is described. Revolution is "blood and punishment"[84] and that becomes symbolically Iran and Khalkhalli: "In fact, that double idea of blood, fitted the revolutionary Iran: with all his Iranian graces, his scientific education and his social ambitions, he had his own dream of blood. His hero was Stalin."[85] Islam and the Islamic are imaged as barbaric, despite modernity and science inflecting Iran and its culture.

But his re-figuring Pakistan beats all. First the distortions: he claims that Pakistan was "a criminal enterprise" as when Hindus and Sikhs, rich and wealthy, left at partition, old "debts were wiped out;" "fortunes were made or added overnight;" the new state merely plundered its way into existence.[86] His telescoping history condemns Pakistan for re-writing British law. "Islamic appendages," "political manipulation," anti-women laws, "Koranic punishments," "public floggings" – all suggests a "backward-looking" ethnicity and national culture,[87] "tribal," "feudal" and

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[78]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 140.

[79]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 139.

[80]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 140.

[81]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 140.

[82]Al-Quaderi, Golam Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels" 2001, "Travels in Absurdity: Islam and V. S. Naipaul" *Journal of Postcolonial Cultures and Societies* 3, 1 (2001), 24.

[83]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 208.

[84]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 214.

[85]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 214.

[86]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 267.

[87]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 268.

"half-slave" in parts.[88] And then the indictment of Mohammed Iqbal for his idea of Pakistan:

> The case of Pakistan was made ... in 1930 by a poet Mohammed Iqbal. Iqbal came from a recently converted Hindu family ... only someone who felt himself a new convert could have spoken as he did...What Iqbal is saying is that Muslims can live only with Muslims ... it would have implied that the good world the one to be striven after was purely a tribal world ... every tribe in his corner.[89]

The bias over recently converted peoples returns. But Iqbal's parents were Kashmiri pundits, apparently living in an ambivalent dialogue with Islamic peoples. Syncretism thrived in 19th century Kashmir. Besides, Iqbal produced a convergence between modern philosophy and Islamic reconstruction. He proposed a theory of self, so far absent in Islamic philosophy.[90] Yet Naipaul would conclude, by re-installing his anti-Islamic prejudice as history: "In its short life, Iqbal's religious state, still half-serf still profoundly uneducated, mangling history...undoing the polity...has shown itself dedicated only to the idea of a cultural desert here..."[91] Thus, for Naipaul, Pakistan's contribution to the world remains inchoate, nothing more than a decertified blotch of contemporary modernity.

9. Conclusion

In my view, Naipaul's effort in his non-fiction is to write or rewrite cultural histories about people and places that he encounters through their narratives of experience. He employs a wide variety of modes that apparently are exceptional. These are but facades and chiefly so, when he uses the Gothic in his non-fiction related to Islam as a means to unfolding horror and angst as the surrealist painters and the early Victorian and later stream of consciousness novelist do. As stated earlier, O'Shea Meddour remarks that Naipaul's reactionary behaviour, the Gothic component, includes having "unpleasant physical reactions," when he notices Imaduddin's crowded table with symbols of modernity, the laptop, and the Koran and its commentaries at once.[92] Naipaul continues to perform acts of displacement, moments of pathetic fallacy, in his writing; he transports

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[88]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 268.

[89]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 269.

[90]For details, see Muhammad Iqbal, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* London: Luzac and Company, 1908.

[91]Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Excursions among the Converted Peoples*, 381.

[92]O'Shea Meddour, "Gothic Horror," 60.

his anxieties onto the context and constitutes the atmosphere as "oppressive."[93] This outright fear becomes the literary convention that turns Islamophobic, for it is continuous with his claims in *Among The Believers* (1981), where he interprets Islamic nations as suffering from the paranoia of contradictions, of desiring modernity and rejecting it at once.

This tendency in Naipaul's writing is driven by his episteme, which is his biased way of seeing the world. His view is clearly determined by an ideological frame that narrates the Islamic world from his socialization in childhood when everything Islamic was inferior and therefore abhorrent.

This episteme is marked by a limited "vision,"[94] as Al-Quaderi and Habibullah suggest. These critics mark among other things a) the "lack of integrity," characterised by "random categorisation" and "totalizing assumptions"[95] and b) his "obsession with Islam"[96] inflected dramatically by his "empathetic identification with" Hindutva ideology[97] and his confusion between his "nativist and non-nativist"[98] location as a writer. This mode of reading people and communities, places and spaces as an apparent objective agent, as outside the object of reading and as appropriating the "language of real life"[99] embeds plentiful lack of historical knowledge as Dalrymple, Said, Wagoner, Amin and many other critics of both Islamophobia and post-coloniality show by their discourse.

His totalisations, his generalisations, his tropology emphasise a cultural stereotyping, profoundly breeding a right-wing identity-politics which is enclosed by its non-egalitarian approach and purpose. What fails as secular-ethic in Naipaul's writing is his inability to represent difference with good faith, thus blunting and destroying what could otherwise have been a truly alternative view of cultural history.

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[93]O'Shea Meddour, "Gothic Horror," 60.

[93]Akeel Bilgrmai, "Occidentalism, the Very Idea: An Essay on the Enlightenment and Enchantment," *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, 33 (19-25 August 2006), 3591-3603.

[94]Al-Quaderi, Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels," 23.

[95]Al-Quaderi, Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels," 23.

[96]Al-Quaderi, Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels," 25.

[97]Al-Quaderi, Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels," 26.

[98]Al-Quaderi, Gaus and Habibullah, Md "Travels," 24.

[99]Karl Marx, "The German Ideology" in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed., Hazard Adams, London/New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc, 1971, 632.

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ATTENDING TO THE PATIENT
Bioethics and Medical Literature

Maheshvari Naidu[♦]

1. Introduction

Robyn Bluhm's recent paper draws our attention to the critical reality that "neither bioethics nor the philosophy of medicine has paid much attention to the relationship between vulnerability and health or illness."[1] Robyn Blum states that "attending to vulnerability due to diminished health solves some problems in current accounts of health and disease and also allows us to better understand the ways in which health problems can change people's lives."[2] Her paper, together with the works[3] of scholars such as Rogers, Mackenzie and Dodd indexes the fact that, within the context of illness and healing, the nature of vulnerability is relatively under researched. These scholars add that by focussing on patients' vulnerability we are capable of illuminating the vital relationship between health and illness. For it is this very vulnerability, that is capable of granting us potentially profound insight into the social face of the illness and access to 'seeing' the person within the patient. I suggest that a medical 'blind spot' or 'ignoring' of patient vulnerability is not only embedded in (much of) the interaction between a large segment of health care workers and the patient, but is also insidiously present in much of the way that the medical literature is constructed. This proves to be 'circular' as the literature in turn is used as 'instructional' by the health care workers and medical practitioners,[4] who further structure their patient relationships along the lines of what the medical literature says.

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[1]Bluhm Robyn, "Vulnerability, Health and Illness," *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics: Special Issue on Vulnerability*, 2012, 147-161, 147.

[2]Bluhm, "Vulnerability, Health and Illness," 147.

[3]Rogers Wendy, Mackenzie Catriona and Dodds Susan, "Why Bioethics Needs a Concept of Vulnerability," *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics: Special Issue on Vulnerability*, 2012, 11-38, 11.

[4]I am opting for the (inclusive) term medical practitioner as I am not merely alluding to the doctors (in this instance the oncologists), but also to the extended web of nurses, radiologists, cardiologists, surgeons *et al.* who all, at some point in the trajectory of the unfolding diagnosis and treatment regime/s, see and consult with the cancer patient.

This paper is meant to contribute to the intellectual conversation on the notion of vulnerability initiated by researchers like Robyn Bluhm. I do this by focusing on medical literature, more specifically medical oncology literature. I relate Bluhm's arguments on vulnerability and philosophy of medicine to a discussion of bioethics in medical literature, and I argue that such a medical 'eliding' of 'patient-worth' in the literature is inherently unethical or '*adharmic*,' in other words it goes against the true duty of the medical practitioner, which is to take care of and attend to the person with the illness and not merely attend to (attempting to cure) the illness.

By drawing on an earlier study of mine with terminal cancer patients,[5] and the narrative insights from the qualitative interviews that emerged from the study, I engage theoretically with the argument that bioethics in medicine is not merely about ethical rules that govern how medical professionals ought to behave and enact their medical selves with the patient, but that it also extends to how the medical literature ought to be written for the interconnected community of medical students, practitioners and the patients. This is about recognising, as Robyn Bluhm points out, the patients' vulnerability. However, I add that we can gain a measure of phenomenological insight into some aspects of this vulnerability through narrative work and narrative inquiry with the patients, by permitting them to 'tell' us about their lived experiences with illness and health, and allowing these subjective insights and insider perspectives to shape aspects of medical literature.

2. Situating the Paper

In attempting to give us an idea of the phenomenological insight into the patient's experience of illness, scholars describe extreme or terminal illness as loss of control over bodily functions, and as a "betrayal of the body," the "increasing alienation from a body that an ill person experiences."[6] The sociologist Nick Fox points out that health and illness are 'phenomena,' that are, 'material' and 'experiential'[7] claiming that while diseases affect organs and cells, they also influence experience and identity. His contention, however, is that despite the elaboration of a social

[5]Naidu Maheshvari, "Performing Illness and Health: The Humanistic Value of Cancer Narratives," *Anthropology Southern Africa* 35, 3&4 (2012), 71-80.

[6]Carel Havi, *Illness: The Cry of the Flesh*, Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2008, 20, cited in Bluhm, "Vulnerability, Health, and Illness," 158.

[7]J. Fox Nick, "The Ill-Health Assemblage: Beyond the Body-with Organs," *Health Sociology Review* 20, 4 (2011), 359-371, 359.

model of embodiment, many scholars and practitioners still saddle themselves with an "implicitly or explicitly biomedicalised body as the location of 'health' and 'illness,' and as the ontological unit of sociological analysis."[8] This assertion is one that I find myself sadly agreeing with. Perhaps this point is most poignantly illustrated within the context of terminal illness and death. To the physician, death and the process of dying happens to the body in measurable and quantifiable terms, while to the patient, dying-and-death is what happens to them emotionally and through the (experienced) materiality of the body.[9]

My ethnographic study[10] was situated amongst a group of female cancer patients. This qualitative study attempted to 'listen' to the patients' 'stories' about their experiences of vulnerability within the context of their illness. These individuals were the patients and not the doctors and were thus normatively positioned as the 'hearers' and not the 'tellers' in the medical discourse that would have begun to take shape around the medical consultation. These women, in most instances, were terminal cancer patients[11] and to them cancer was semiotically and literally, about both death and dying. More importantly, and as the women shared, the illness was also about both the medical and social. This is the point of insertion for this particular paper as many of the issues that the women voiced in their narratives appeared to be 'visibly absent' from the medical literature. They did not merely speak about their illness, but rather their 'selves' as being ill. In other words, there was a profound awareness of their changing selves, in the context of the cancer. Many voiced that the doctors saw them as merely patients, not people, and that they were written about as clinical patients, as opposed to ill people. Many women voiced profound experiences of pain, vulnerability and a sense of 'disconnect' and shared stories of bodies that they had lost control over. An ill and in that sense, abject body is a "messy, sick, and damaged body,"[12] says Julie Kristeva.

[8]Fox, "The Ill-Health Assemblage: Beyond the Body-with Organs," 359.

[9]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 77.

[10]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 77.

[11]The reason for narrowing the gaze on an illness such as cancer is simple. This is because for a disease that (in most instances) has come to signify death, it is powerfully alive within and on the body of the patient in ways that are at once both visceral and visual, and it (the illness) brings out the most heartbreaking vulnerabilities in the patient where the body appears to let you down in the most taken for granted aspects, as patients begin to lose control over their bodily functions.

[12]Kristeva Julia, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, 2.

This was especially true within the context of the cancer patients who shared stories of extreme bleeding, extreme hair loss and what they felt to be embarrassing loss of bodily control. Their narratives revealed that cancer caused experiences of "brutish suffering"[13] in the form of disorder, powerlessness and pain.[14] The 'abject' body, because it may become unreliable or difficult to control, can compound the experience of alienation. These experiences also serve to create experiential and conceptual distance between the self and the body. Pamela van de Riet[15] talks about these kinds of bodily bleeding as a kind of corporeal irruption which can alienate the self from the body. In these conditions, the body becomes disconnected and alien in very personal ways. Almost all the participants in my study, spoke about intense and profound feelings of disconnect from themselves. However, these stories rarely make it to the pages of a medical journal. These shared stories in turn give credence to the assertion that the biomedical model sculpts a particular understanding of the ill person that is reductionist at best, and that can perhaps be claimed as stripping much of the humanity off the patients.

3. Literature, Medical Literature and Ethics

The grand design of the biomedical model can thus be seen as reducing illness to a biological mechanism of cause and effect,[16] while the practice of medicine itself is broken down into smaller and smaller 'medical bytes' in the name of specialisations; the oncologists, the cardiologists, the radiologists, the surgeons and so on.[17] All of this is further reflected in how the medical literature is constructed, and how the patient is viewed within medical health models and praxis. The surgeon deals with the tumour that

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[13]Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2.

[14]In my 2012 ethnographic study with the terminal cancer female patients, the informants, Rose and Mary's cultural backgrounds and personal grooming habits indicated that they had been fastidious about hygiene. Thus bleeding and coughing up blood in the context of their illness was met with revulsion. They both spoke about deep feelings of dirt. However, they spoke about dirt in ways that transcended bodily dirt. It was dirt that they felt they could not wash off (be rid of), as it violated their coherent boundaries as women. Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 74.

[15]Van der Riet Pamela, "The Sexual Embodiment of the Cancer Patient," *Nursing Inquiry*, 5, 1998, 248-257, 495.

[16]Wong Nancy and King Tracey, "The Cultural Construction of Risk Understandings through Illness Narratives," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34, 5 (2008), 579-594, 581.

[17]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 71.

has to be removed, while the oncologist deals with the tumour that has to be treated and shrunk with neoadjuvant chemotherapy, in preparation for the surgery, while the nurse administers the chemotherapy itself. It is not (merely) one individual that takes care of the ill person. Perhaps we can be facetious and suggest no one(!) takes care of the ill person. For although it is multiple practitioners attending to the patient, it is actually no one attends to the ill person. The tumour has an attendant, as do various body parts when they begin to creak, crack and give way under the incredible strain of (toxic) chemotherapy and radiation. The oncologist will be called in more often as will the specialist physician, who is meant to deal with the complications that invariably and mercilessly arrive in the wake of the powerful drugs injected into the cancer patient. So the various body parts have their attendants, while quite often there is no one inside the medical profession, for the patient, as a person. Of course one understands that these multiple specialists bring multiple skills, and that no one single practitioner can be expected to be an expert in all the subspecialisations. However, this does little to console the ill persons who feel increasing lost amongst the specialists, none of whom actually know them.

One is not suggesting that each medical specialist, the oncologist, the surgeon, the radiologist, etc. begin to spend extended time with each and every ill person. It is the quality of the time spent and the meaningfulness and mindfulness of the interaction that is vital. It is insights that could be gained by each of the various medical practitioners, through the medical literature, while they are being trained and throughout the duration of their practice, that now becomes critically important. If the medical literature is barren and bereft of the social face of the illness (like cancer) and of the actual vulnerabilities of the patients, there is very little that the practitioners are learning of the ill person, beyond merely the medical.

In many instances, and certainly in popular usage (I myself use it in this paper), the term 'patient' is fairly innocuous. However, within the context of medical literature, and this is what the participants of my earlier study were attempting to share with me, the term moves beyond the denotative and connotes a de-'facing' and homogenising of the ill person into the clinical/medical patient.

While literature in its broad sense (and as a stand-alone word) refers to written works of creative and artistic dimensions, appending a qualifying term immediately in front of the term 'literature,' as in 'anthropological literature' or 'sociological literature,' or as in this case, 'medical literature,' changes the textual and connotative complexion of the term, and the term

comes to now refer to more formally structured written works, and in many instances, disciplinary-based articulating texts. The paper thus comprehends 'medical literature' as it is commonly understood, that is, as referring to articles in journals, texts and books committed to the discipline of medicine. My concern here is the 'ethics' in medical literature, or the embedded values and sense of 'right' within the texts, in terms of the (wholly clinical) descriptions of illness and health, and especially medical literature that purports to describe the patients who are ill.

The British sociologist Nick Fox,[18] with an abiding interest in the politics of medicine and health, draws our gaze to the need for a reorganisation of the medical 'care relationship,' claiming that these are powerful sites for destabilising the normative status quo within the health fields. He asks for a re-appraisal of issues of structure, identity and knowledge in medical sociology and points out that it has been complicit in the creation of particular constructions of 'the patient' and of 'health' and 'illness'[19] within medical knowledge. My point is that all of this comes to be reflected within discourse and the medical literature, which of course is itself dictated by a bio-medical discourse and 'understanding' of the patient. Philip Tovey pointed out as far back as 1992(!) that we are in an "era in which 'evidence-based medicine' (EBM) is increasingly directing research and practice, and the randomised controlled trial remains dominant in the collation and definition of that evidence base"[20] which comes to be put forward in medical literature.

More recent social sciences accounts working within a wider social framework[21] have however agitated against such a positivistic stance, and have become acutely aware of the limitations of traditional medicine in comprehending, and therefore meaningfully assisting, the experience of the patient. While there will always be the need for some purely clinical studies, which are necessarily written in a grammar of statistics and percentages and with an analytical vocabulary, there is equally, I argue, an

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[18]J. Fox Nick, *Postmodernism, Sociology and Health*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004; *The Body*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012.

[19]Fox, *The Body*, 6.

[20]Tovey Philip, "Narrative and Knowledge Development in Medical Ethics," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 24, 3 (1998), 176-181, 177.

[21]J. Twigg, "The Body in Social Policy: Mapping a Territory," *Journal of Social Policy* 31, 3 (2002), 421-439; S. Harrison and C. Smith, "Trust and Moral Motivation: Redundant Resources in Health and Social Care?" *Policy and Politics* 32, 3 (2004), 371-86; Julia Twigg, *The Body in Health and Social Care*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

urgent need for medical texts and literature that describe the lived experiences of the patient woven into their discourse and description of the illness. As it stands at present, much of that kind of personal perspective is considered 'popular' literature and finds space on the shelves marked, 'Autobiographies' and 'Personal Cancer Stories' or 'Illness Stories.' While the patients read these, the practitioners (tend mainly) to read the medical literature. This appears to me as a bizarre disjunction. For gone are the days where we can naively assume that only the medically trained can, and should, be reading the so called medical literature. The average person wishes to be informed of what is happening to them. Yet much of the medical literature serves to alienate this section of the audience and fails to come close to conveying the patient's sense of loss within the contexts of profound life threatening illnesses such as cancer[22] and HIV/AIDS.

As Twigg reminds us, and borne out my ethnographic work with the women with cancer, for many patients, the experience of modern medicine, especially hospital-based medicine "is a disjunctive one, involving not just pain but also dislocation, objectification and a denial of their sense of embodiment."[23] Traditional medicine and traditional medical praxis construes and constructs the patient in positivistic or clinical terms within the medical literature. The circular path that I alluded to earlier is more apparent when we realise that the inscriptional approach and practices offered by medical treatments, especially within disease like cancer, is itself underwritten by epidemiological and environmental impact studies, which forms part of the corpus of medical literature.

We are compelled to become increasingly vigilant of the dominant hegemonic ideologies of illness and body, in medical texts and in medical praxis, through which we are increasingly being obliged and compelled to enact illness and health. Poststructural approaches that are cognisant of pluralistic perspectives offer some measure of vigilance as they challenge fundamental canonised positions in social theory, and allow a destabilising and re-reading of central hegemonic ideas in medical health and the literature. Foucault's[24] critical analysis of the medical gaze and the disciplinary power of medicine, which he claimed as being exerted over individual bodies and the (medical) body politic, is a good example.

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[22]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 2012.

[23]Twigg, *The Body in Health and Social Care*, 98.

[24]Foucault Michel, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, New York: Vintage, 1975; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage, 1979.

4. Care Ethics within the Medical Literature: A Form of Dharma?

My position is that ethical perspectives are potentially able to exert a moral[25] power in reshaping the 'care relationship' as reflected in medical texts, and articulated in medical practice. This may offer a counter to our contemporary commodity culture (which exists even within the medical world). For the 'commoditization of health care' within a market economy limits personal contact between doctor-patient, in the interest of efficiency.[26] While this may not be completely so in some health care clinics and hospitals, there is nevertheless a push for quicker turnover in the name of limited resources and placing patients on a triage. All of which further erodes into meaningful contact time (and care) between the patient and the medical practitioner.

Feminist theorists have used the term *care ethics* to describe a relational approach that does not rely on "rubrics of adjudication such as rules or consequences,"[27] in other words the so called consequences of affording patients 'too much time' (extra time taken to 'really listen' to the fears and questions of the patient that appear to extend beyond the medical). Working from both a philosophical and a critical feminist perspective, Maurice Hammington contextualises care ethics within the patient-medical practitioner dyad in a manner that makes sense to me. In fact it makes *dharmic* sense.[28] Hammington describes relational care ethic as being both "a practice and a value."[29] The notion of 'care' conceptualised thus, combines a disposition of openness and connection to the 'other,' in this instance, the patient, and is argued as being able to foster empathy, understanding, and actions on their behalf (from the practitioner). Perhaps an even more powerful insight from Hammington is that 'care' is a relational approach to morality, born out of the ontological notion[30] that human beings are inherently connected. His point is

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[25]Though terms such as *ethics* and *morality* are contextual, and have situational meanings within diverse cultural communities, I am using these terms in their broad universalistic and cross cultural sense of meaning 'respect' for the patient as a person.

[26]M. Cancian Francesca, "Paid Emotional Care: Organizational Forms that Encourage Nurturance" in *Care Work: Gender Labour and the Welfare State*, ed., Madonna Harrington Meyer, New York: Routledge, 2000, 136-48, 141 cited in Hamington Maurice, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 5, 1 (2012), 52-69, 53.

[27]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 53.

[28]I am using the word '*dharmic*' here to refer to the sense of 'rightful duty,' in this instance of the medical practitioner towards the patient in his/her care.

[29]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 54.

[30]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 54.

that a common theme in this kind of care-ethics is that of a "heightened sense of attentiveness to the one cared for" as a kind of "engrossment" and "concentrated attunement to the other."[31] All of this is certainly not a new or a startlingly novel notion within many religious traditions, especially within the non-dualistic religious traditions. It is however, a 'fresh' perspective and less known within contemporary philosophy of medicine. It also offers exciting ethical possibilities within medicine that perhaps takes us back to what may have originally been meant regarding taking care of the patient, and encapsulated within the following quote: "The traditional understanding of beneficence, dating back to Hippocrates, is the idea that physicians have a duty to benefit the patient."[32]

The codified Hippocratic Oath[33] can perhaps be considered as the quintessential piece of medical literature. The Oath opens with the newly qualified doctors pledging: "I do solemnly vow, to that which I value and hold most dear." The oath itself comprises eleven pledges that the newly trained doctor commits to. Pledge No. 1 promises to honour the profession and refers to service to humanity, while pledge No. 8 talks about sacred trust and 'keeping aloof' from 'wrong.' Most revealingly, pledge No. 6 and No. 7 refers to the profession of medicine in compassionate and humanistic terms, and refers to medicine as both an art and a science! The young doctors close the pledge by swearing that "I make this vow freely and upon my honour." Thus the humanistic values of care, honour and respect for both the profession and the patient, as simultaneously a value and a practice, is deeply embedded into the fabric of the oath. This is not to say that there are no nurses or doctors and other health care workers who currently practise their profession with honour and dedication. The point though is that, it is becoming increasingly difficult, within a biomedical model, for such a practitioner to fully honour his/her profession as Hippocrates meant – *as both an art and a science.*

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[31]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 55.

[32]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 62.

[33]Excerpts from the Hippocratic Oath: 1) That I will honour the Profession of Medicine, be just and generous to its members, and help sustain them in their service to humanity; 6) That I will lead my life and practice my art with integrity and honour, using my power wisely; 7) That above all else I will serve the highest interests of my patients through the practice of my science and my art; 8) That I will maintain this sacred trust, holding myself far aloof from wrong, from corrupting, from the tempting of others to vice. Retrieved Online on 4 March 2013. http://www.med.cornell.edu/deans/pdf/hippocratic_oath.pdf

It is of course not unusual to meet the caring oncologist. Yet this oncologist is often compromised by the medical system itself, into enacting particular kinds of understandings and interactions with the patient. This is borne out in the narratives shared by my participants.[34] Some of the women mentioned oncologists who they felt were very caring and respectful. However, just as many pointed out that even when they met "that kind of oncologist," *within* the consulting room, they were often greeted by the clinical approach of the radiologists outside. Conversely, other women mentioned that the while the nurses were sympathetic, many of the doctors were more dispassionate. True, as pointed out by the reviewer of this paper, in many countries, including India and parts of Africa, the services of Catholic nuns and institutions are praised for their compassionate care of their patients. One adds though, that these individuals are not working with a bio-medical discourse and a bio-medical model of illness and health, or with a bio-medically constructed 'patient.' Within such a model, are situated the structural binaries of 'illness and health,' the 'ill person and the healthy person,' the 'patient and the doctor'. While the latter labours under a model of care that is becoming increasingly ideological and consumerist, the nuns work within a totally different epistemic and understanding of person and duty (*and care*).

5. Narrative Ethics and Dharma

How does the 'care ethic,' which is praxis rather than textual, relate to medical literature you may ask? It is at this juncture that narrative ethic makes its appearance. We arrive full circle back at my opening comments: "'gaining phenomenological insight into patients' vulnerability through narrative inquiry with the patients, by allowing them to 'tell' us about their lived experiences with illness, and allowing these subjective insights and insider perspectives to shape aspects of medical literature.'"

The writer and specialist oncologist Siddharth Mukherjee in his monumental book, *The Emperor of All Maladies: An Autobiography of Cancer*, puts it wells when he says: "A patient, long before [s]he becomes the subject of medical scrutiny, is, at first, simply a storyteller, a narrator of suffering, a traveller who has visited the kingdom of the ill."[35] Put simply, a narrative ethic asks whose story is being told, and by whom. It also asks whose interpretive framework is being given authority. These

[34]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 2012.

[35]Mukherjee Siddhartha, *The Emperor of All Maladies*, New York: Scribner, 2010, 46.

critical 'who' questions afford us a post-structural interrogation around the construction of (medical) knowledge. A narrative ethic may also identify that the 'voice' of those on the "margins of discourse," and reveal that their narratives and interpretations, "has something to offer those, such as doctors, and may alert us to aspects of practice which are experienced in ways that are not intended."[36] Narrative ethics is also concerned with transformation. It allows us to reflect upon the fundamental assumptions and tenets of a practice or discourse, the impact of those assumptions upon the most vulnerable, and creates the space for transforming the practice to incorporate the insights of the patient narrators.[37]

Nicholas and Grant point out that there can be a narrative nature to medical knowledge and highlight the place of (patient's) 'story' in medicine, and the extent to which it can structure medical knowledge and play a central role in the transmission of this knowledge, through the medical literature one adds. After all, we cannot deny that 'story' "forms the basis of medical care in the narratives that patients bring to their doctors and in the narrative the doctor constructs in relation to the patient."[38] Stories or narratives are said to underpin social reality and 'social (constructed) reality may be a reflection of the individual's thoughts and actions. Let us for a moment, 'play' with the notion of 'story' as a metaphor, and stretch its representative limits.

The 'story' or 'narrative' that the practitioner offers back to the patient may well be 'written' in a 'language' that is unreadable and incomprehensible to the patient. The medical practitioner's story often has a storyline (diagnosis and prognosis), a plot (treatment regimes – radiology, chemotherapy, surgery) and characters (the radiologist, the oncologist, the surgeon) as well as a stage of well laid out props (medical linear accelerator for the radiotherapy, chemotherapy drugs, the operating theatre for the surgical enactments). In some ways all of this is (purportedly) designed around the main protagonist, the patient. Yet the patient has not much of a 'spoken role.' The patient is the silent actor, who is in large part, scripted to follow the direction of the practitioner.

For it is in the initial visit that the doctor/oncologist listens intently to the description of the symptoms told/narrated by the patient in order to

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[36]Nicholas Barbara and Gillett Grant, "Doctors' Stories, Patients' Stories: A Narrative Approach to Teaching Medical Ethics," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 23, 5 (1997), 295-299.

[37]Nicholas and Grant, "Doctors' Stories, Patients' Stories," 297.

[38]Nicholas and Grant, "Doctors' Stories, Patients' Stories," 296.

construct his pathology. The subsequent visits see the medical practitioner normatively positioned as the 'teller' as he/she begins to unpack the treatment regime within the 'medical science.'

6. (Ethical) Medical Literature and Narrative Medicine

For me it is narrative medicine that holds the greatest promise in attempting to bridge what may be perceived by some as a gap between social and natural sciences. For narrative medicine can be seen as possessing 'soft edges' or potentially porous boundaries between the social and medical sciences[39] and able to potentially reshape a more 'ethically conscious' medical literature (and a cohort of practitioners who are also ethically literate!).

It was Trisha Greenhalgh who reminded us over a decade ago that "appreciating the narrative nature of the illness experience" in essence "does not require us to reject the principles of evidence-based medicine."[40] She pointed out that such an approach does not necessitate an "inversion" of the established hierarchy of evidence to the extent "that personal anecdote carries more weight in decision making than the randomised controlled trial."[41] She reminds us that it instead invites the use of an interpretive paradigm through which it is understood that the patient experiences illness in a very particular manner.

Narrative medicine has also been put forward as one solution to an increasingly impersonal medical environment, where educators in the medical humanities, turn to narratives and narrative studies to teach medical students "an emotionally fulfilling and interpersonally related professional practice."[42] Such an approach is seen as a way to commit to "fostering the use of the humanities, social sciences, and the arts as a lens for examining issues in health, medicine, and healing."[43] Sayantani Dasgupta a Buddhist and a medical practitioner, claims that illness narratives written by those suffering illness, (and researchers collecting such narratives) form a genre of writing that has grown in the past few

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[39]Naidu, "Performing Illness and Health," 78.

[40]Greenhalgh Trisha, "Narrative Based Medicine in an Evidence Based World," *BMJ* 318 (7179), 1999, 323-335, 323.

[41]Trisha, "Narrative Based Medicine in an Evidence Based World," 323.

[42]Dasgupta Sayantani, "Between Stillness and Story: Lessons of Children's Illness Narratives," *Journal of American Academy of Paediatrics* 119, 6 (2007), 1384 -1391, 1384.

[43]Dasgupta, "Between Stillness and Story," 1384.

decades, adding that such stories or pathographies[44] are "a postmodern phenomenon, in which narratives authored by the ill give voice to an experience that was once narrated solely by the medical establishment."[45] While this growth is appreciated, it is still however, far from an exponentially adequate growth and is yet to filter down to a large segment of practitioners who remain pedantic in their positivistic approach. Yet, the process of transforming patient histories into medical language – in its representation of subjective experience, gives us critical and vital access to the perceptions and valuation of the ill.

Philip Tovey proposed that, not only do personal stories offer a valuable source of insight into the empirical reality of situations and events, but that we are also able to make the leap from the ideographic to the generalisable. According to Tovey, in this way the argument that stories are insufficient for medical ethics falls away.

> With empirically gathered stories, established theories, principles and expectations are opened up to the challenge of accounting for numerous real-life situations and experiences. The aim of using the approach is as a means to extend knowledge about "patient worlds," to 'enter' those worlds empirically and thereby contribute to a multidisciplinary approach to these complex issues which is already incorporating qualitative research data.[46]

All of this quite understandably and very legitimately demands research rigour which ideally would provide the means for the "elevation of individual stories" where a "contribution to the evidence base medicine"[47] can be made. This re-affirmation of medicine as more than only scientific knowledge and technical proficiency needs to be accelerated into both literature and praxis.

6. Conclusion

Fox's discussion around developing a perspective for revealing the politics of 'health talk' or 'illness talk,' points out what is becoming increasingly

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[44]See Aronson Jeffrey K., "Group Autopathography: The Patient's Tale," *British Medical Journal* 321 (2000), 1599-1602.

[45]Dasgupta, "Between Stillness and Story," 1386. See also the works Charon Rita, "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust," *JAMA* 286, 15 (2001), 1897-1902; "What to Do with Stories: The Sciences of Narrative Medicine," *Canadian Family Physician* 53 (2005), 1265-1267.

[46]Tovey Philip, "Narrative and Knowledge Development in Medical Ethics," *Journal of Medical Ethics* 24, 3 (1998), 176-181, 181.

[47]Tovey, "Narrative and Knowledge Development in Medical Ethics," 177.

obvious; that illness is never merely just illness. My plea is that, as researchers working on social issues around health, and in our bid for reorganisation of the care relationship and of care models, we need to push for greater recognition of that which may seem deceptively obvious, but which appears to elide the 'medical gaze' of many, that in dealing with 'illness,' we are actually dealing with 'ill people.' We need to see the ill person as a whole person rather than merely the patient and bearer of symptoms. In cultivating this 'whole person' understanding doctors would 'stretch' their imagination and empathy, which their formal training and the formal instructional medical literature and clinical case studies might have encouraged them to disregard as irrelevant.

We need to thus add to the urgency of such a perspective (beginning in medical literature and further articulating in medical praxis) by proposing a more humanistic and ethical postmodern medical social science, that in turn constructs the medical literature. For me such a perspective allows a privileging of the patients' experience of illness. Good medical care involves a role relationship besides being that of a specialist, a human relationship.

June Goodfield's observation, made all of thirty seven years ago, is still potently true, and one that needs to be held in sight of the medical gaze. Goodfield asserted that "Cancer begins and ends with people. In the midst of scientific abstraction, it is sometimes possible to forget this one basic fact."[48] Hammington reminds us that an overlooked facet of caring is its "epistemic contribution." For Hammington, caring can be conceived as inquiry; an active effort to know others for the purposes of understanding that may lead to deeper caring.[49] Again for me, this speaks directly to our sense of interconnectedness and has the potential to transform patient and practitioner interaction. Vulnerability may well be "an ontological condition of our humanity"[50] and attending to this vulnerability is attending to both the ill person and our own (rightful) duty and humanity.

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[48]Goodfield June, *The Siege of Cancer*, New York: Random House, 1975, 219.
[49]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 56.
[50]Hamington, "Care Ethics and Corporeal Inquiry in Patient Relations," 56.

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ETHIC OF ROMANCE IN THE *TWILIGHT* SERIES
Dream-Fulfilled in the Honourable Male Vampire

Ferdinand D. Dagmang♦

1. Introduction

A good number of readers branded the *Twilight* series as amateurish, emotionally empty, inane nonsense, naïve, conservative, monotonous, contradictory, or trivial.[1] These are *Twilight* haters who mostly populate the internet; but no matter how much they dislike the work, they could not deny its enormous popularity. Such popularity has been acknowledged by literary critics who have fairly recognized the importance of analysing *Twilight*.[2] However, most of their critical studies did not pay attention to the fact that this popular appeal is an indication of the readers' response to an element in

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[1]See Chloe Buckley, "Natalie Wilson, Seduced by Twilight and Gizelle Liza Anatol, ed., Bringing Light to Twilight," http://www.gothic.stir.ac.uk/uncategorized/natalie-wilson-seduced-by-twilight-and-gizelle-liza-anatol-ed-bringing-light-to-twilight /accessed 28 March 2013; Tracey Baptiste, *Who Wrote That?: Stephenie Meyer*, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010.

[2]Rebecca Housel and J. Jeremy Wisnewski, eds., *Twilight and Philosophy: Vampires, Vegetarians, and the Pursuit of Immortality*, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009 studies the series from various philosophical perspectives; Nancy Reagin, *Twilight and History*, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2010 provides young adult readers with historical contexts for various characters in the series; Kurt and Olivia Bruner, *The Twilight Phenomenon: Forbidden Fruit or Thirst-Quenching Fantasy?* Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2009, and Beth Felker Jones, *Touched by a Vampire: Discovering the Hidden Messages in the Twilight Saga*, Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2009, approach the novels from a religious standpoint; Melissa Click, Jennifer Stevens Aubrey, and Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, eds., *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, and the Vampire Franchise*, New York: Peter Lang, 2010 focuses on the cultural, social, and economic aspects of the series; Gizelle Liza Anatol, ed., *Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011, enter into scholarly conversation with the texts, and Natalie Wilson, *Seduced by Twilight: The Allure and Contradictory Messages of the Popular Saga*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co., 2011, offers a comprehensive analysis of the text from cultural studies perspective.

the novels which relates to their own longings, needs, or desires. Indeed, *Twilight* has struck a chord in the heart of its readers. The "powerful element" in *Twilight* that produced the kind of impact on readers is, however, neither evident nor openly announced by the author. Analysis could, however, identify it and bring it into the open. Moreover, a fair amount of thoughtful study may be required to clarify what that 'chord in the heart of its readers' would refer to.

When readers number up to more than 300 million, this would reflect not just the ability of Stephenie Meyer, the author of the *Twilight* series, to strike a chord in the heart of her readers but also that 'chord' is so common, prevalent, and shared globally (to date, the work has been translated into 40 languages). It is because of that chord's prevalence that one may wonder what constitutes it and how come it resides in so many hearts? The question of prevalence may direct us to the longings of the hearts of readers when they embrace Edward Cullen as the vampire that they need for this age. Meyer may have something to say about that longing too, especially when her novels did start as a dream; and especially when she crafted Edward, the main vampire character, as the locus of struggle to realize her ideal of ethical responsibility in the context of romantic encounters.

This paper will mainly comment on the following inter-related topics: 1) Meyer's dream and longings as the source of the novels' drive; 2) the novels' ethical approach to girl-boy romance as constituting the narrative's appeal and 3) the thirst for the old-fashioned moral values as the "chord in every reader's heart." I will argue that *Twilight* is a timely offer to young adult readers who consume it with enthusiasm because of their search and mood for what is right in romantic contexts. With these goals in mind, I will develop how Meyer has transformed *her dream* (dream^{a}) and *longings* (dream^{b}) into a creative and ethical act through literary composition. I will also argue for the convergence of the readers' response to *Twilight* as a dovetailing between the authorial ethical position and the readers' longing (dream^{c}) for what is ethical.

2. Meyer's Dream (dream^{a}) and the *Twilight* Series

Stephenie Meyer, when interviewed about her books, has disclosed portions of herself. Through her testimonies,[3] we are provided with

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[3]Stephenie Meyer's personal testimony is found in her official website where she yields some valuable information which could either confirm or refute every attempt to understand her and her *Twilight* series. *www.stepheniemeyer.com*.

background materials that, to some extent, have shown us a better picture of the author. Readers have also contributed their share of insights. Forums and blogs supply data which help in assessing the impact of the *Twilight* series on readers. These have provided clues, not only about the books' appeal to readers, but also about what's behind that appeal.

Ms Meyer, a mother of three young boys and a (used-to-be) full-time housewife, was born in 1973. Her family lives in Phoenix, Arizona – a place which Meyer characterizes as "hot, hot, hot." She graduated at Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in English. She has been married for ten and half years. When her sons were born, she became busy with 'babysitting' and 'spousecaring' until she had an unusual and alluring dream (dream[a]) that led her to write the first of the romance-adventure series, *Twilight*.[4]

It was on June 2, 2003 when Meyer woke up from a dream featuring a girl and her lover vampire. The two characters were together in a scenic forest where they exchanged thoughts about their unconventional relationship and their peculiar predicament. Meyer reproduced this dream in chapter 13 of *Twilight*.[5] Her words about her dream:

> Though I had a million things to do, I stayed in bed, thinking about the dream. Unwillingly, I eventually got up and did the immediate necessities, and then put everything that I possibly could on the back burner and sat down at the computer to write – something I hadn't done in so long that I wondered why I was bothering.[6]

Eventually, the dream led Meyer to go on into a writing marathon. She did not stop putting on paper what her dream imprinted in her memory. Later she expanded the original dream. Even when already in bed (upstairs), Meyer would rise up and go (downstairs) to her computer to encode what kept running in her head. She would later have a pen and paper next to her. It became too tiring to get up from bed every time she had a material rising up her mind. Nobody seemed to know about this by-the-side activity. It was only later, when a book was already getting into form, that Meyer told her sister about her preoccupation. With encouragement from her sister, Meyer decided to get *Twilight* published. It took her three months to complete the story of Bella and Edward in the first book *Twilight;* actually, two years to produce the definitive version. It was a long and tedious process but with the help of a literary agent the work was finally sent to

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[4]Stephenie Meyer, *Twilight*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005.

[5]Meyer, *Twilight*, 260.

[6]http://www.thetwilightsaga.com/page/stephenie-1/ accessed 28 February 2013.

seven publishers; six of whom rejected it. Lucky for Little, Brown and Company who made Meyer sign for a three volume work for young adults. She was so excited and elated to produce what is now called the *Twilight* series; not three but four-volume work which includes *New Moon*,[7] *Eclipse*,[8] and *Breaking Dawn*.[9]

The first book, *Twilight,* starts with the departure of Isabella "Bella" Swan from sunny Phoenix, Arizona to rainy Forks, Washington to live with her father, Charlie. This allows her mother, Renée, to travel with her new husband, a minor-league baseball player. As a newcomer in a very small town, Bella attracts much attention at her new school. Several boys compete for her attention, no matter how clumsy she appears. Edward Cullen, a 'vegetarian' vampire (one who only drinks animal blood), who also drives a Volvo, is Bella's classmate. On her first day of school, Edward seems to resist her presence. Bella, who was puzzled by Edward's behaviour, could not, however, get over her attraction for him.

Bella, with the help of Jacob who is a family friend's son, soon discovers Edward and his family are vampires. Despite this, Edward and Bella fall in love. Edward, however, has to constantly struggle with the fact that Bella's scent is so irresistible. In his words,

> The fragrance coming off your skin ... I thought it would make me deranged that first day. In that one hour, I thought of a hundred different ways to lure you from the room with me, to get you alone. And I fought them each back, thinking of my family, what I could do to them. I had to run out, to get away before I could speak the words that would make you follow...[10]

Each time they meet, Edward had to control his desire to kill her. His words to Bella:

> Isabella ... Bella, I couldn't live with myself if I ever hurt you. You don't know how it's tortured me...The thought of you, still, white, cold ... to never see you blush scarlet again, to never see that flash of

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[7]Stephenie Meyer, *New Moon*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006.

[8]Stephenie Meyer, *Eclipse*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007.

[9]Stephenie Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008. *Twilight* has been translated into 40 languages and has sold millions of copies. The Harry Potter seven volume series still tops as it has sold more than 450 million copies and translated into 67 languages. Meyer's *Breaking Dawn* sold about 1.2 million in one day; Rowling's seventh and last instalment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,* sold 8 million copies in 24 hours.

[10]Meyer, *Twilight*, 270.

intuition in your eyes when you see through my pretenses ... it would be unendurable... You are the most important thing to me now. The most important thing to me ever.[11]

However, their relationship is disturbed when James, a tracker vampire, hunts Bella for sport. The Cullen family has to hide her and devises a plan to confuse the tracker but Bella is tricked to give herself up to James as she thinks he holds her mother as hostage. Edward and the rest of the Cullen family rescue Bella before James could kill her. They have subdued James but only after he had bitten Bella's hand. Edward sucks the venom out of Bella's system before it can spread and transform her into a vampire. Bella had been saved and they return to Forks. Bella expresses her desire to become a vampire but Edward refuses and even made himself invisible in Forks.

The sequels (*New Moon, Eclipse,* and *Breaking Dawn*) have developed the whole romance-drama-adventure around Bella and Edward, and the werewolf Jacob and his friends and their families providing some twists. The culmination was the immortalization of Bella into a vampire and the surmounting of major obstacles, including the 'complicating' romance with Jacob and the fight with the powerful Volturi coven of human-blood-sucking vampires. *Breaking Dawn* has concluded the series by putting the exclamation point to a fantasy that starts with Meyer's dream[a].

3. Meyer's Longings (Dream[b]) in the Narrative

Meyer says she is a simple *Hausfrau,* a status which has become connected with routine; it calls to mind a woman's domestic share in society's division of labour. When she began working on *Twilight,* Meyer had to insert writing into her daily life. This gave her a great amount of excitement; and difference to predictability. The writing process itself had thrown her into an extraordinary plane. It had made her pierce through the ordinary *Hausfrau* definitions; she was then steadily moving beyond the matrix of the household, extricating herself away from the world of commoners. She was enjoying the writing, as she revealed in her website: "I was just writing down a story for my personal enjoyment, letting it grow as it would and lead where it would. No pressure, just fun."

Writing her dream may have been just for fun, but nothing could stop Meyer from projecting her longings (dream[b]) in her novels. Through the *Twilight* series, such longings are to be realized in Bella, in Forks (the novel's setting), and in Edward.

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[11]Meyer, *Twilight*, 273.

Meyer's hope for a baby girl has been frustrated in real life, but this did not prevent her from birthing her in *Twilight*. Bella is her baby, as well as herself. Taking care of her baby and herself in the *Twilight* series tells us how writing is itself a process of giving birth to dreams. In caring for Bella, Meyer gifted her baby no less than the experience of true love (being able to give it and being able to receive it from a traditional Edward, 100-year old, but frozen in his 17-year old gorgeous frame). The form of this true love will be framed and enhanced by the amazing characters like Jacob (who is also ready to sacrifice himself for Bella), the werewolf friends of Jacob, the vampire family of Edward, and the simple and traditional setting of Forks, Olympia, Washington, all giving a world of support to a truly 'Gothic romance.'

The writer's social world (Phoenix) was far removed from Forks where her baby Bella had to move and discover a most exciting life. Although Forks was damp and soggy enough to look dreary, it also provided a sanctuary for vampires. Its neighbourly environment stands in stark contrast to the urban anonymity and harshness of Phoenix everyday life. For Meyer, we could surmise: true love must start and get fulfilled in a setting that provided the favourable conditions – broader friendships, family and extended family togetherness, unsullied mystical wilderness, and simplicity in almost everything. It is also amidst all of this provincial ecology that the intensity of deep teleological passions is felt more strongly because they could be clearly heard thriving far from the distractions of urban jungles. Nothing less than the promise and possibility of true love's realization could be devised by Meyer for Bella; providing herself something different from her prosaic *Hausfrau* existence. Here, a situational correction of reality is introduced and communicated through fiction.

We do not know how much of Meyer's personality is written in Bella's character, but we are sure to find the common clumsiness and uninteresting-ness being ignored by Edward for the more important Bella who loves him and who, because unfathomable, becomes very interesting. Bella's impenetrable brain makes her special to Edward who has the ability to enter into people's minds. This made Bella's blood 100 times more appetizing than ordinary mortals' blood. But even when tempted, Edward's resolve not to kill Bella became more firm. He wanted to preserve her humanity because Bella's love, her loved ones, and his own family are far more noble reasons than the gratification of a fleeting desire.

Meyer's dream[a] triggered an alternative motion and the formation of dreams-fulfilment through writing; a different act that seeks and finds for itself

another world. This creative act is making a breach, an extra-ordinary form of scribbling, in her memory slate. But a happy scribbling for her since it supplements or alternatively soothes some memories imposed by everyday existence, of a drudgery that saps her energy on a daily basis. Writing after the dream[a] has provided a different kind of force and an exciting path different from the everyday life that modern Phoenix has imposed on her. Thus, writing *Twilight* does find another world and its spirit, a different world; one just inverse of Phoenix. This alternative world is made concrete through writing *Twilight*, which is itself a transgressive act to fulfil longings (dream[b]).

Twilight series as a product of longings is a writing by an individual triggered by various experiences in the world. The writing on her memory slate by the pressures and dents of quotidian routine and pragmatic life had incited her psychic apparatus to wish for something and which the archived traditional world could actually offer – this is, at least, suggested by the *Twilight* heroes and their settings. Writing about this made that world more visible, something to share, something to be already enjoyed by searching readers, also yearning for the immortal (readers' longings, dream[c]).

The abovementioned characters and setting are Meyers longings (dream[b]) displaced and realized in the novels. It is, however, through a particular ethical stance, involving self-denial, sacrifice, and struggle that Meyer's longings are to be crowned and fulfilled. This ethical stance, featuring the character of Edward, will be played up in the context of romance. Such is the ethical turn of the *Twilight* novels.

4. An Ethics of Romance: Dreams Fulfilled

The *Twilight* novels belong to the 'coming of age' (*Bildungsroman*[12]) cum romantic genre in literature. This may explain the overwhelming reception of the series by girls – first, in how they are able to relate with Bella's romantic adventure and transformation and second, in how they are able to negotiate their lives around the struggles and exemplary behaviour of Edward. Yet, this does not categorically identify the novels' more *specific* source of

[12]"*Bildungsroman* (Coming-of-Age, Apprenticeship, Formation) novels recount the development (psychological and sometimes spiritual) of an individual, to the point at which the protagonist recognizes his place and role in the world. The main character undergoes adventures and/or inner turmoil in his growth and development as a human being. Some characters come to grips with the reality of cruelty in the world – with war, violence, death, racism, and hatred – while others deal with family, friends, or community issues." http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/emcconnell/files/Literary%20Genre%20Descriptions%20%20Semmler.pdf accessed 12 March 2013.

appeal. Bealer's observation may give us some lead: "The phenomenal response from women and girls to Edward as a romantic hero creates a space and a market for twenty-first-century vampires who do not drain their female victims of blood, but rather their own vampiric bodies of the will to dominate."[13] Bealer here suggests that it is not Bella's character that pushes up *Twilight's* appeal, but Edward's uncharacteristic behaviour as he denies himself the normative role of a bloodsucking vampire. This is not to belittle Bella's place in the narrative, but rather to give more weight to the centrality of Meyer's dream-fulfilment in Edward. In this regard, Meyer's longings being displaced and condensed in Edward takes a more ethical turn.

A vampire who restrains himself from sucking the blood of his beloved is central to the allure of Meyer's novels. Yet, this self-restraint that is offered as the right behaviour is also wedded to the image of Edward groomed as beautiful. This crafting of Edward the beautiful and good vampire, may link Meyer's literature with the classical narratives that portray a hero as possessing *kalokagathia*.[14] Nevertheless, Edward is not immediately granted by Meyer this blending of the good and beautiful qualities. Like the heroes of the Greek classics, Edward must be able to pass through struggles and combats that will eventually reward him the possession of *kalokagathia* – qualities that ethical characters embody.

Edward's struggle is always triggered and compounded by Bella's presence. Her provocations (and the ensuing troubles brought by non-vegetarian vampires) may have made life for Edward more difficult. This, however, may have given more tools for Meyer to highlight, on the one hand, the virtues of Edward and the other members of his vampire family and, on the other, the humanity of Bella who represents and dramatizes the active longing of many individuals for incorruptibility. This binary contrast between humanity and the virtue-bearer vampires creates a fundamental tension between human longings for salvation and the immortal's preservation of character and virtue that assures the enthronement of what is beautiful and good.

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[13]Tracy L. Bealer, "Of Monsters and Men: Toxic Masculinity and the Twenty-First Century Vampire in the Twilight Saga," in Gizelle Liza Anatol, ed., *Bringing Light to Twilight: Perspectives on a Pop Culture Phenomenon*, 150.

[14]A phrase used in the Greek classics to describe an ideal of personal conduct, especially in a military context. The word is adjectival, composed of two adjectives, καλός ("beautiful") and αγαθός ("good" or "virtuous"); see Werner Jaeger, Gilbert Highet, trans., *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945, 11ff.

Edward must struggle between his selfish appetite for the blood (life) of Bella and his commitment to refrain from killing humans for food. He has to go against his naturally powerful emotion so that his most beloved human being may continue to live and flourish. It will be through the virtues of self-control, postponement of gratification, masculine tenderness and care that he will be able to preserve Bella's humanity and lead her to her equally overpowering pursuit of immortality. This seems to be the event, the exemplary experience of inner struggle to transcend (or oppose) the confusing human drive (including Bella's drive) of unthinking intimacy, naïve desire for incorruptibility and immortality, that provoked in readers a responsiveness that could lead to an awakening of an ethical imagination. Or at least this experience could trigger in them the refinement of moral sensibilities which could translate personal longings into hope and hope into practice.

Nevertheless, Edward's encounters with Bella and the ensuing struggles do not immediately bring him rewards; these will actually bring him face-to-face with his own limitations and weaknesses. He complains about his cold and stony state and even hates himself. This self-loathing surfaces in a line addressed to Bella: "You don't care if I'm a monster? If I'm not *human*!"[15] If indeed Edward is here identified as a monster, readers would be amazed and felt attracted to him as a "monster" who could eventually redeem himself through his struggle with his natural vampiric instincts via self-denial. Meyer's creation of a potential venomous bloodsucker into an honourable vampire in every romantic minute of the story has gripped girl-readers who see in Edward their right and ideal romantic partner. This also shows that the road towards transformation, which is the attainment of capacity for ethical responsibility for the self and for others, is a road tormented by constant tugs-of-war. This, however, is the only road towards transformation. Meyer is realistic enough to represent an ethical struggle as a combat; that when Edward wins this combat, a transformed capacity will be there at his behest. But first, he must face himself through his struggles.

Edward's struggle with himself may be likened to the classical tension between conscience and concupiscence especially raised by Thomas Aquinas and other Christian writers in spirituality.[16] Edward

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[15]Meyer, *Twilight*, 102.

[16]See *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, Pt. 1, Q. 60, Art. 3 trans. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Paris: Christian Classics, 1981, 299.

recognizes his 'monstrosity' which he sees condensed in his powerful and pleasurable concupiscent desires. If this predatory quality dominates his personality it would mean both to validate that monster and to destroy Bella. If he follows the inclination of this monster, it would mean succumbing to immoderate and harmful self-indulgence, thereby reducing Bella as an object to be consumed and enjoyed.[17]

Edward's predicament may be further clarified by Plato, through Socrates, who presents the soul as a chariot, driven by a charioteer and pulled by a team of two winged horses, one compliant and well-behaved, the other stubborn and unruly.[18] Meyer's picture of Edward as one caught in between two powerful contradictory forces highlights the inner battle already familiar to people who struggle for sanctity or wisdom. In Meyer's literature, it is a struggle towards near immortality. Meyer, in revisiting the classic portrayals of struggle towards transformation, has packed in Edward something 'old' but refreshing to modern-day girl readers.

In *Twilight*, the ethical way is to follow what is right as dictated not by concupiscence but by conscience. In making Edward avoid what to him is a monster-like behaviour, Meyer not only endorsed *kalokagathia*, but also enthroned a form of human flourishing that Bella must follow. It is, first of all, in the avoidance of consuming your beloved that humans realize their intrinsic worth. It is, eventually, in a relationship full of mutual care, between Edward and Bella, that a right kind of romance will perfect this recognition of human worth.

Bealer points to the transformation of a vampire from a 'monster' into one more humane and who is able to show restraint and honour:

> Though "conflict rag[es] in his eyes," Edward allows himself to touch Bella tenderly, "swiftly brush[ing] the length of [her] cheekbone with his fingers," and realizes that he is capable of mediating his strength and interrupting his thirst in order to enjoy a sensory experience that is mutually enjoyable and gratifying. Whereas feeding is the vampiric equivalent of phallic domination, with the pleasure and desire located only on the penetrative partner, Edward and Bella's careful touching is a model of intersubjectivity in which both participants give and receive pleasure. When Bella touches Edward, he allows that even his cold,

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[17]George A. Dunn, "You Look Good Enough to Eat: Love, Madness, and the Food Analogy," Rebecca Housel and J. Jeremy Wisnewski, eds., *Twilight and Philosophy: Vampires, Vegetarians, and the Pursuit of Immortality*, Hoboken: New Jersey: 2009, 12.

[18]See Plato, *Phaedrus,* sections 246a - 254e.

> hard skin responds to the affectionate touching he has denied himself since his transformation, sighing, "You can't imagine how that feels." Edward's decision to be emotionally and physically intimate with Bella reveals that the one way to harness his bloodlust is to, surprisingly, indulge in a very different kind of lust. In interesting ways, the novels seem to conflate what Edward calls his "human instincts…buried deep, but they're there" with a conception of heterosexual desire that is not predatory and dominative but empathetic.[19]

This is the culmination, the goal, the reward of a self-denial that discovers the capacity for caring – not consuming – sexual gestures. Edward's restrained acts of romance embody Meyer's declaration of what is ethical in every sexual encounter. Girl readers of *Twilight* delight and feel satisfied in this extraordinary attractiveness of beauty and goodness (*kalokagathia*). On their part, men, in the light of Bella's risky offering of herself to a struggling male, must learn from Edward who is able to revaluate his monstrous desire for bloodsucking. It is through their lack of conscience (for what is right) that they become dishonourable. When they feast on women as consumable sexual partners and without the amount of self-restraint, they fail to take the lead of Edward the honourable vampire.

5. Reader's Place in Meyer's Dreams

Meyer, through Edward's transformation and possession of *kalokagathia*, has offered an ethical re-visioning of the male role in romance. She has put the ethical burden on males who, like Edward, must be able to challenge gender roles. Girl readers have appreciated this and found it congenial to their longings for an ideal mate. When Meyer translates her dream[b] in Edward as the ideal mate for Bella, it is a reward for readers whose own dreams also took hold of what is good and beautiful – something which they could identify as alternative to toxic males who abundantly populate their world.[20] As Edward struggled to restrain his desire to 'eat' Bella, to control his instincts for self-gratification, and to behave with extraordinary display of tenderness and care, readers idealized him not for his physical and material endowments but for his ethical qualities that nullify every natural vampiric tendency to hurt other people.

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[19]Bealer, "Of Monsters and Men," 144.

[20]Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992; Cas Wouters, *Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West, 1890-2000*, London: Sage Publications, 2004.

Twilight may have become instrumental in remembering its young adult readers – giving them a place in literature when other texts fail to address their longings. It was quite a similar situation with the *Harry Potter* series which *remembered* the younger generation-readers who, in turn, responded with characteristic enthusiasm by plunging themselves into the most exciting places and events where they could join Harry, with his fragility, innocence, humility, and sensitivity, in discovering his own gift of power to annihilate the widely feared dark character, Voldemort. Readers of *Twilight*, too, would respond with their own brand of plunge into Forks with Edward and Bella, and delight in their experience of the uncharacteristic power of self-control, tenderness, and care – conquering the enemies that lurk inside every male-vampire's instinct. This reader-experience could be delightful for those being remembered and given a place in a hoped-for scenarios amidst the toxins of patriarchal dominance and male concupiscence. Young-adult women readers may have actually chosen *Twilight* as their banner narrative in announcing to "males" what to them are the more important values and ideally right behaviour in sexual encounter.

If readers have truly found an alternative world of alternative characters, then *Twilight* has powerfully stoked sensitivities a fair amount of questioning: that readers not only pine for something non-existent but that the real world they live in ought to change. *Twilight's* alternative (no matter how conservative, inane, or anthropomorphic) is still an alternative which young-adult readers could not realistically expect from their real surroundings. This is the ethical experience opened up by *Twilight*: an imagination worked up by a literature that evokes 'traditional' virtues. Without much effort, readers are powerfully charged with emotions and desires for what *Twilight* has imaginatively offered. This is possible since a prior sense of social flourishing may have already bloomed in their own dreams, similar to Meyer's dreams that eventually produced *Twilight*.

Meyer's dream[a] exemplified her longing of an appropriate world and characters, leading towards a craft that unified both author and readers and their common worlds that subordinate traditional virtues. *Twilight,* with its representations of ethical values, does provoke remembrance of virtues marginalized and subordinated by market society. The author-reader unification is referred back to a common social base whose members share the society's life's patterns, demands, requirements, contradictions and problems. The author and readers of *Twilight* are grounded in a reality and immersed in a common situation that generated not only progress (economic) but also a moral crisis.

In modernity's workplaces and consumers' venues, people are required or pressured to become more rational, autonomous, efficient, aggressive, and competitive. It is in those venues where the modern individuals gain their dispositions and identities, especially male individuals who may also have found their niche in today's capitalist markets.

Moderns are expected to become more 'manly' in the pursuit of goals offered by a market environment defined by males whose presence at home are normally abbreviated. In modern settings, people are generally expected to act like the qualified men who must struggle toward success which in turn is understood in terms of usefulness and productivity. An unintended consequence, however, results: their rational pursuits and struggles may afford them some material dividends but these could neither satisfy their deeper need for affection nor compensate for the absence or lack of nurture afforded by the warmth of care from mothers, homes, and other intimacy-producing social bonds or solidarities. Because people are largely unconscious of this need-satisfaction imperative being anchored in affection and care, they continuously compound their problems by thinking that their pursuits and successes are their real sources of happiness, including their sexual pursuits.[21]

It is thus not surprising that the so-called sexual revolutions[22] that rocked Europe and North America were triggered by the modern work-related pursuits and contexts: 1) migrations of males and females towards the factories and away from the supervisions of traditional institutions, characterized by the move towards regularly waged labor and towards greater individual freedom during the Industrial Revolution, 2) the mixing of males and females in the rise of the schools and universities that produced educated and more liberal employees for offices, industries, and commerce, 3) the prevalent use of contraceptives among women who either limit reproduction in order to rationalize their family resources or for the sake of their jobs/careers or to preserve their gains for autonomy

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[21]See, Herb Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male*, New York: Signet, 1976; Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992, 149-152; Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill, London/NY: Continuum, 2004, 51-61.

[22]See Ferdinand D. Dagmang, *The Predicaments of Intimacy and Solidarity: Capitalism and Impingements*, Quezon City: Central Books, 2010, 168ff.; Paula Kamen, *Her Way: Young Women Remake the Sexual Revolution*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2000.

and leisure, and 4) the women's experience of taking charge of their lives boosted by their own income and a greater sense of women entitlement and rights. In such contexts, every sexual encounter is not necessarily for procreation or for the prospect of marriage, but primarily an expression of choice and a decision taken for the sexual excitement and pleasure that it offers. Nevertheless, when the two sexes meet we also observe the story of the dominant male's initiatory sexual tension and aggressiveness which could define the problematic character of sexual encounters.[23]

In other words, modernity has produced one of the moral crises especially felt by women as a burden of absence or lack of tender and caring male partners, who, instead of behaving like Edward, are seeking themselves through sexual encounters, the contact that they pursue but could not articulate as a much deeper expression of longing for nurture.[24] Instead of giving tenderness, à la Edward's expression of care, males pursue and consume pleasure in sex. Sexual gratification, in such cases, may become like a consumed good or service whose ability to gratify diminishes every time one pursues the same good or service.[25] In the consumption of material things, people must continually experience newness or novelty in order to be constantly fired up in their consumption habits. When sexual encounters pass through this consumption format, the pursuit of sexual gratification may also demand frequent change of techniques or partners. The woman's more defined capacity to show care may thus be abused by the more relentless, compulsive, and self-centred males in their quest for sex and power. It is thus no longer a surprise that female readers of *Twilight* dream for the Edward of their lives.

What Meyer and her readers share as a common experience of breakdown or loss of traditions also produces a *conscience collective*;[26]

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[23]This is not to downplay the role of social, economic, political and cultural power of males in every sexual encounter. See Bell Hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, New York: Routledge, 2000.

[24] "We may therefore maintain, with Freud, that the germ of sexual pleasure in the adult resides in the infantile sources of pleasure. I should note that we could just as readily derive everything from the nurturing instinct rather than from sexuality." Sabina Spielrein, "Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being," *Journal of Analytic Psychology* 39 (1994), 159 (155-186); see also Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 3ff.

[25]Mirroring the economic theory of marginal utility, the continuing reduction of utility of a good or service because of the increase of consumption of that good or service.

[26]"The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the

Twilight is thus an 'event' that retrieves and evokes the cognitive-moral states common to both the author and the readers who live in an advance-modern world that is missing or losing (but hoping for) the values of self-control, postponement of gratification, masculine tenderness and care.

Meyer has appropriated traditional values which she feels must constitute a world for a plain girl and a gorgeous vampire who did represent that chivalry in a world suffering from the absence or lack of stability, commitment, tenderness, and disciplined and dedicated passion.

What we see in print brings to life a non-existent; makes visible the invisible. That is why readers are hooked on the text when what they see could compensate for what is absent in sound or hearing within their lifeworlds. Or when their lifeworld saturates them with too much ordinariness and the textual allows them to see and feel rare and exciting moral worlds. This is not a mere act of 'waiting passively' for Edward. The appropriation of the more traditional values may actually lead women readers to voice out their ethical preferences in the face of aggressive males – something that feminists could downplay or ignore.

Thus, the whole narrative itself carries the ethical impetus of Meyer's characterization of what really matters in this world where the anxiety-loaded young people are forced to spend their productive lives away from immortalizing qualities. This is the ethical turn of the narrative, even as it is not openly announced by Meyer: acquiring the vampire-like *kalokagathia* is the road to human flourishing. It is through Edward and his vampire family that readers may find opportunity for sensitizing themselves towards a more ethical response. A single-minded pursuit à la Bella could provoke in people that desire for a world of desirable characters.

Readers have become part of that unifying story – by the fact that they have entered the world of the narrative, they will be inexorably bound to the enveloping membranes of those values, which behave like concentrated substances that permeate the boundaries of the selves who, in turn, would have achieved some kind of balance.

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collective or common consciousness." Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. W.D. Halls, London: The McMillan Press Ltd., 1984, 38-39.

In French, the word *conscience* refers to 'conscience' and 'consciousness.' It thus covers both the moral beliefs/sentiments and cognitive beliefs/sentiments shared by individuals in a society. See Karen E. Fields, "Translator's Introduction," in Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York: The Free Press, 1995, xlvii ff.

6. Conclusion

Readers of the *Twilight* series are asked to plunge themselves into a world that brings alive (again and again) the heroic and marvellous – they plunge into this experience of a world which represents moral values that have become 'old-fashioned' or subordinated. In this sense, *Twilight*, is also a form of critique on the present-day lived-world which no longer effectively represent immortal values of self-control, disciplined romance, and sacrifice.

Meyer made this critique possible by giving the immortal to Isabella Swan and thus ride on what would transport readers into uncharacteristic experiences. The attribution of clumsiness, whininess, and plainness to Bella has become the magic wand's trick that made readers to withdraw from their own forms of drudgery and move towards Forks and participate in Bella's extraordinary experiences; in her predicament, unusual discoveries and transformations have happened – things that amaze and remind readers about moral values that immortalize love and life.

In *Twilight*, tension is played up in the character of Edward who, through ethical negotiations, conquers self and wins his object of affection, Bella, through his appeal to conscience rather than concupiscence. In this 'coming-of-age' narrative, Meyer has mustered creative and ethical energies to produce a revision of characters from venomous masculine bloodsuckers to life-giving honourable vampires. Moreover, the whole *Twilight* series that witness to the creative and ethical move of Meyer earned a corresponding response of readers who could identify themselves with Bella and the object of longings in the vampire character Edward, the most sought-after romantic partner who is able to assess correctly his destructive capacity if he indulges in a socially-defined male-centred penetrative intercourse. By denying himself the most gratifying act of "eating" Bella, Edward has affirmed what many girls would actually prefer in a boy-girl encounter: *romance rather than intercourse*. As such, the novels testify to the possibility of a right approach, an ethical stance, to sexual relationships during teen and young-adult years.

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LANGUAGE AND TRUTH OF AESTHETICAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICES
Philosophical Explorations after Wittgenstein

Jose Nandhikkara♦

1. Introduction

Wittgenstein, in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* (TLP)[1] remarked, "It is clear that ethics cannot be put into words. Ethics is transcendental. (Aesthetics and Ethics are one and the same)" (6.421). Aesthetics and ethics are one and the same because they cannot be put into words as they are not concerning contingent matters of fact; they concern matters which cannot be otherwise. The logic of aesthetical and ethical discourses is different from that of the propositions of natural science. Like logic and unlike science, aesthetics and ethics are not discourses on contingent matters of fact and cannot be expressed in bipolar propositions. According to this view, there cannot be any truth value in the discourses on ethics and aesthetics as "The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science" (TLP 4.11). Wittgenstein famously summed up his early philosophy in the *Tractatus*: "What can be said at all can be said clearly and what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence" (Preface). Aesthetics and Ethics are included among the subjects that could not be said clearly and therefore must be passed over in silence. This looks like just the opposite of what we generally agree and practice. There are aesthetic and ethical discourses and they are fundamental to human forms of living. Wittgenstein also admitted that "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical" (TLP 6.522). The mystical would include all that is beyond what is the case and what cannot be given in propositions of natural science – aesthetics, ethics, philosophy, religion, etc.

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[1]Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, C. K. Ogden, trans., London: Routledge, 1922. The abbreviation TLP is used for references in the text.

Our everyday life experiences resist theoretical discourses. For example, Wittgenstein wrote: “Describe the aroma of coffee. – Why can’t it be done? Do we lack the words? And for what are words lacking? – But how do we get the idea that such a description must after all be possible? Have you ever felt the lack of such a description? Have you tried to describe the aroma and not succeeded?” (PI 610).[2] Similar examples can be drawn from the world of literature and fine arts as well as from the world of ethics and religion. We are not able to describe the aesthetic and ethical sense of the discourses, though they are shown in the discourses and actions.

Though Wittgenstein began his *Lecture on Ethics* with Moore’s view of Ethics, as “the general enquiry into what is good,” he extended it further to include also “the most essential part of what is generally called Aesthetics.” This shows again how he has interlinked philosophy, ethics and aesthetics in his logical and linguistic investigations. According to him, instead of saying ‘Ethics is the enquiry into what is good’ he could have said “Ethics is the enquiry into what is valuable, or, into what is really important, or ... into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living. I believe if you look at all these phrases you will get a rough idea as to what it is that Ethics is concerned with” (LE 5).[3] All these phrases could give us also a rough idea as to what it is that Aesthetics is concerned with.

In this paper I shall explore the family resemblance between aesthetics and ethics through a study of Wittgenstein’s remarks on aesthetical and ethical discourses, judgements and practices. He rejects the craving for analytic definition of aesthetic and ethical terms such as “beautiful,” “art,” “good,” “just,” etc. and treats such terms as family-resemblance concepts. There are neither ostensive definitions nor a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of these terms. The uses of these terms are inter-related in variety of ways, with a “complicated network of overlapping similarities” (PI 65). This family resemblance is linguistic, conceptual and ontological. Wittgenstein’s thoughts on aesthetics and ethics are interwoven with his philosophical investigations on language, logic, mathematics, rule following, mind, etc. They are also intimately connected with his life.

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[2]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe, trans., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953. The abbreviation PI is used in the text.

[3]Wittgenstein, “A Lecture on Ethics”, *Philosophical Review* (1965), 3-12. The abbreviation LE is used for the references in the text.

2. Aesthetics and Ethics in the Life and Works of Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein had abiding interest in Ethics and Aesthetics philosophically as well as in his personal life. Wittgenstein was a talented artist in many fields of fine arts. He enjoyed music and had fine sense of music, performed Schubert songs, sculpted a bust of Drobil, designed a house for his sister, and helped generously artists of his time. His philosophical writings are also evidence for particular literary styles and his language is considered as one of the greatest in German philosophical prose. He gave great importance to the style and considered correct style as integral to philosophy and lamented that his style is not poetic enough.

The autobiographical notes, letters and conversations with friends reveal Wittgenstein's struggles with ethical life. He wrote to Russell: "Before everything else I must become pure."[4] When he made a detailed confession to Fania Pascal, she asked in exasperation, "What is it? You want to be perfect?" His reply was: "Of course I want to be perfect!"[5] "Call me a truth-seeker," he once wrote to his sister (who had, in a letter, called him a great philosopher), "and I will be satisfied."[6] In his continuous search for truth, he struggled himself like a monk to remain pure and perfect. He was convinced that he cannot be a philosopher unless he is a good human being.

His philosophical interests are intertwined with his interests in Aesthetics and Ethics. In October of 1931, he wrote a comment on the ethical dimension of his philosophising, showing parallel with his work as an architect in the late 1920s: "Work on philosophy – like work in architecture in many respects – is really more work on oneself. On one's own conception. On how one sees things. (And what one expects of them)" (CV 24).[7] He wrote to Ludwig von Ficker regarding *Tractatus* that the work is "strictly philosophical and at the same time literary." He also pointed out that "the point of the work is an ethical one."[8] Thus his work on the philosophical logic is at the same time, philosophical, ethical and

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[4]Malcolm, N. "Wittgenstein, Ludwig Josef Johann" in P. Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 8, New York: Macmillan, 1967, 328.

[5]Rhees, R., ed., *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 50.

[6]Monk, R. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, London: Vintage, 1991, 3.

[7]Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, G. H. von Wright, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998. The abbreviation CV is used in the text for references.

[8]Quoted in G. H. von Wright, *Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1982, 81.

literary. In his writings, the literary remarks are intertwined with topics of the "ethical" and both belong to the "unsayable." He wrote: "In art it is hard to say anything, that is as good as: saying nothing" (CV 26). He concluded his *Lecture on Ethics*:

> My whole tendency and, I believe, the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it (LE 12).

This is true about aesthetic discourse and aesthetic judgement. What we say do not add to our knowledge; however, they are unique and fundamental tendencies in human life. "Really what I should like to say is that here too what is important is not the words you use or what you think while saying them, so much as the difference that they make at different points in your life" (CV 97). Aesthetics and Ethics give meaning and value to life and it is our lives that would give meaning and significance to our aesthetical and ethical discourse and judgement. Only in the stream of life do words and actions have meaning.

Wittgenstein thought that philosophy should be written poetically: "I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written as a form of poetic composition" (CV 24). The German text shows more clearly the relation between philosophy and poetry: philosophizing is poetizing.[9] He wrote later in the *Nachlass*: "the philosopher should be a poet" (120, 145r).[10] According to him, like the philosopher, "The poet too must always be asking himself: "is what I am writing really true then? – which does not necessarily mean: "is this how it happens in reality?""(CV 40). Philosophers and poets are committed to truths, but not the same as the empirical truths that are investigated by the scientists. He also confessed that he would have liked to be a poet but was not able to be one.

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[9]*Culture and Value* 24: *"Ich glaube meine Stellung zur Philosphie dadurch zusammengefaßt zu haben, indem ich sagte: Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur dichten."*

[10]Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein's Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

3. What Can Be "Said" and What Can Be "Shown"

The distinction between what can be "said" and what can be "shown," is a fundamental thought of the *Tractatus*. According to Wittgenstein, the purpose of the book is to *show* this distinction, as he wrote in the Preface:

> This book deals with the problems of philosophy and shows, as I believe, that the method of formulating these problems rests on the misunderstanding of the logic of our language. Its whole meaning could be summed up somewhat as follows: What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent. The book will, therefore, draw a limit to thinking, or rather – not to thinking, but to the expression of thoughts; for, in order to draw a limit to thinking we should have to be able to think both sides of this limit (we should therefore have to be able to think what cannot be thought).

According to Wittgenstein, the only meaningful language is the fact-stating language of the natural sciences and only they can be stated clearly. He began his work with the statement: "The world is all that is the case" (TLP 1) and concluded with: "Whereof one cannot speak thereof one must be silent" (TLP7), implying that meaningful language must be limited to discourses about what is the case. This prescription, however, is impossible to maintain: "We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched" (TLP 6.52). There are no scientific answers for "problems of life;" they are better addressed in discourses on and practices of literature, ethics and religion. He wrote, "The use of the word "science" for "everything that can be meaningfully said" constitutes an "overrating of science" (Nachlass134, 145) and "The urge towards the mystical comes of the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science" (NB 51).[11] The urge towards aesthetical and ethical also comes from a fundamental non-satisfaction of the objective, verifiable and rational world of science. According to the scientific logic, "The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science" (TLP 4.11). Propositions are neatly divided into true or false; if a proposition cannot be classified either as true or false, it does not have cognitive value either. If something does not have truth value and cognitive value, it is nonsense and unsayable. Hence everything that does not belong to the scientific purview, including aesthetical and ethical, belongs to the realm of the unsayable.

[11]Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914-1916*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961. The abbreviation NB is used in the text for references.

It is characteristic of the scientific point of view to offer explanations in the form of theories or hypotheses for everything. A complete theoretical explanation which is objective, verifiable and universal is seen as the ideal, though often we satisfy with an inference to the best explanation. It is very difficult to be cured of the disease of wanting to explain (RFM 333),[12] partly because of the enormous success and influence of science and technology in our daily lives. Understanding seems to be identified with scientific explanation in terms of abstraction and theory formation. We become oblivious to other obvious forms of understanding in Aesthetics and Ethics where methods and rules of empirical explanations are not appropriate.

Aesthetic and ethical explanations are not causal explanations, as is the case generally with scientific explanation. Wittgenstein observed in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* that the puzzles arising from the effects the arts have are not puzzles about how these things are caused. They are not subject to verification by scientific experiments. The aesthetic and ethical value of an object or an action cannot be reduced to the psychological effect it has on people. Something is valuable aesthetically or ethically by their intrinsic values in relation to the forms of life (LC 11-18, 21).[13] As in the many fields of human experiences and practices, in Ethics and Aesthetics also we understand more than what we can express and we express more than what we can theoretically articulate and systematically explain. According to Wittgenstein, "Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness" (BB 18).[14] Philosophers who were put to sleep by the success of science[15]

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[12]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G. E. M. Anscombe, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978. RFM is used as abbreviation in the text.

[13]Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, C. Barrett, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966. LC is used as abbreviation in the text.

[14]Wittgenstein, *The Blue and the Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958. BB is used as abbreviation in the text.

[15]"In order to marvel human beings – and perhaps peoples – have to wake up. Science is a way of sending them off to sleep again" (CV 7).

happily see their roles as under-labourers to the master builders of science.[16]

According to Wittgenstein's point of view in the *Tractatus*, there is an important distinction between the world as the totality of facts, what can be said, on the one hand, and the mystical, what cannot be said but only shown, on the other. This also demarcates sense from nonsense. For those who are under the spell of the scientific point of view there is nothing to be silent about; what we can speak about is all that matters in life; the rest is neither true nor meaningful. Wittgenstein, however, did not share this scientific view of life. He remarked: "I may find scientific questions interesting, but they never really grip me. Only conceptual & aesthetic questions have that effect on me. At bottom it leaves me cold whether scientific problems are solved; but not those other questions" (CV 79). The aesthetic and ethical questions are of paramount interest for Wittgenstein. He lamented of the culture of the time which over-emphasised the role of science: "People nowadays think, scientists are there to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to entertain them. That the latter have something to teach them; that never occurs to them" (CV 36). For him, what matters in human life and gives value and meaning to life lay beyond the boundaries of scientific experiments and systematic language. For, we will not find values among the facts of the world, for everything is what it is. The world is 'all that is the case' and science addresses the question: what is the case and how things are. The sense of the world, what constitutes its value, must lie outside the world. It cannot be one more fact among the scientifically observable facts in the world. Aesthetics describes what seems to be the case and Ethics investigates what ought to be the case. Both of them have, of course, relations with what is the case; they are not limited to the latter, however. The truth and meaning of scientific discourses are intertwined with the truth and meaning of philosophical, aesthetical and ethical discourses and seeing these connections is important for various language games in the

[16]Locke wrote in "The Epistle to the Reader" in his classic work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: "The commonwealth of learning is not at this time without master-builders, whose mighty designs, in advancing the sciences, will leave lasting monuments to the admiration of posterity; but everyone must not hope to be a Boyle or a Sydenham; and in an age that produces such masters as the great Huygenius and the incomparable Mr. Newton, with some others of that strain, it is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge…"

complicated forms of life. Wittgenstein even while investigating the logic of an ideal language was sensitive to the great importance to what lies outside of the purview of science, which includes aesthetical and ethical, and to preserve it from the bewitchment of the sciences.

In the *Zettel*, to the observation by the interlocutor that "“Joy” surely designates an inward thing," Wittgenstein replied: "No. “Joy” designates nothing. Neither any inward nor any outward thing" (*Z* 487). "It is not a *something,* but not a *nothing* either!" (*PI* 304). Aesthetics or Ethics is not an experience of something; but not a nothing either. Aesthetic and ethical discourses are not about what is the case; aesthetic and ethical judgements are not regarding how things are in the world, though such judgements can be made only in relation to what is the case. Though there is a distinction between what is the case and what seems to me the case, they are not separate. Aesthetic and ethical truths are different from empirical truths. What is the case can be judged in terms of true and false; what seems to me the case is of another category. This is also true about ethical judgments which are made on what is the case normatively on the basis of what ought to be the case. For example, the truth of the ethical prescription, "You should speak the truth," is different from "You should speak well." Aesthetical and ethical discourses have their own style; they are expressed in symbolic language with plurality of meanings rather than in conceptual language of uniform meaning. That does not mean that "You should speak the truth" means different things; it has plurality of applications and meaning is to be understood in use.

4. Practice: Key to Understand Aesthetics and Ethics after Wittgenstein

Following Wittgenstein, I would like to argue that like language, Aesthetics and Ethics are practices (refer PI 202). The notion of practice would clarify that the elements of objectivity, regularity and normativity are interwoven in Aesthetics and Ethics. They make sense only in the context of objective, regular and normative practices.

First of all, Ethics/Aesthetics is objective; there is a distinction between thinking that one is following ethical precepts and actually following them. Objectivity safeguards the distinction between seems/thinks so and is so. Though it is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, whatever seems aesthetical to me is aesthetical is not an acceptable position; this is all the more so in Ethics. Following ethical precepts and aesthetical guidelines is something that persons actually do, not merely something that seems so to the agents. It is only in the actual

practice that Ethics/Aesthetics is understood and followed. Practices provide the objective criteria for following ethical precepts and aesthetic events. A person's sincere belief that he/she is following an ethical precept or aesthetic guideline, though necessary, is not sufficient to judge that he/she is actually following an ethical precept or an aesthetic principle.

Secondly, there is regularity, meaning, Ethics and Aesthetics are repeatable procedures. In order to describe ethical and aesthetic events one has to describe practices, not one-time occurrences, whatever it might be (refer RFM 335). Like other practices, they are repeatable over time (and place) and across persons and they can be taught and learned. One action does not make a practice, ethical or aesthetical. As I am not justified to judge on the rule-following character of a creature on Mars who looked at something like a signpost, and then walked parallel to it (Nachlass124, 187), I have no justification to judge on its ethical or aesthetical character by observing one action, even if I knew all its feelings at that moment. It must act in a certain regular way. I need to see the action being repeated a number of times and more importantly its connection with the rest of the Martian's life.

Whether I would be able to judge the action of the Martian depends on how much I know about its stream of life. An action, like a word, can be judged only in the stream of life. Following an ethical/aesthetical precept involves the mastery of many interrelated practices and a whole web of human behaviour. One cannot do an action just once and claim that it is an ethical/aesthetical act. The whole circumstance would make the point clear, especially what preceded and followed that act. What in a complicated surrounding, we call ethical or aesthetical, we would not call it so if it stood in isolation; it relates to a way of living. Indeed, ethical and aesthetical acts will have their significance only in the context of a regular human life. The bedrock of our practices, including Ethics and Aesthetics, is the regularity of practice and agreement in judgements. This is something fundamental. Ethical and aesthetical take place in the sphere of actual behaviour of living human beings and its foundations are in the stream of our lives. As in the other cases of practices, we need normative regularity, not just natural regularity. That is our third point, normativity.

Normativity, here, means that regularity is subject to standards of correctness. Ethics and Aesthetics are concerned with how we ought to do rather than stating what or how we do. The distinction between is and ought ought to be kept here; there is a correct way of doing an ethical and aesthetic practice. These practices are not just regularities of behaviour but

regularities that have a normative force, ways human beings ought to act. It is manifested in a regularity that is normative which presupposes understanding and judgement. The judgement itself is possible only where an established pattern of behaviour is discernible. It is essential to have such standards of correctness to specify the scope and content of any ethical/aesthetical practice. This does not rule out creativity, growth and development in such practices. As in other practices, we not only inhabit these patterns but also shape them as we go on responsibly and creatively.

With regard to empirical and logical practices, the fact that most of us use similar concepts to represent the world means that our judging takes place within the context of an agreed framework such that disagreements are in principle resolvable. "People don't come to blows over it" (PI 240), as Wittgenstein remarked. Ethical/aesthetical precepts, however, do not make assertions about the world but propose ways of living, and disagreements about them cannot be resolved by reference to empirical and grammatical facts. What differentiates an ethical/aesthetical claim from an expression of preference is the claim to general validity, the claim that it is not just one way of being human but a correct way of being human. The value judgements are distinguished also by their personal dimension, meaning they are not accepted by all whereas the empirical judgements are accepted by the vast majority of us.

In answer to the question 'Why do you find certain ethical/aesthetical practices significant?' one typically narrates stories. Here giving examples and telling stories is not an indirect means of explaining – in default of a better. In the end, however, one can only reiterate one's reaction and say that it is because they are significant. Understanding such a response is similar to understanding a piece of music, according to Wittgenstein.

> Why must these bars be played just so? Why do I want to produce just this pattern of variation in loudness and tempo? I would like to say "Because I know what it's all about." But what is it all about? I should not be able to say. For explanation I can only translate the musical picture into a picture in another medium and let the one picture throw light on the other (PG 41).[17]

One has to understand the music, its characteristics by similarities of one musical note with another and its relation to other aspects of human life. Finally, one has to listen to the music and understand it. It is possible that there would be human beings who would lack this musical ear. Similarly,

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[17]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, R. Rhees, ed., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974. PG is used as abbreviation in the text.

after giving various examples to elucidate an ethical picture what one could say further as a final argument against someone who did not want to go that way, would be: "Why, don't you see …!" – and that is no argument (refer RFM 50). That is not an argument not because it is something outside the realm of reason, but because it concerns the conditions for the possibility of the operations of reasons in following an ethical practice.[18] One has to see ethical connections, the way we perceive beauty in aesthetic objects and music in what we hear. As a result of practice, we hear something musical, see something beautiful and take something ethical. What we understand by 'music', 'beauty' and 'ethical' transcend what we describe in explaining 'music,' 'beauty' and 'ethics' and we speak about these phenomena more than what we can systematise. However, as Wittgenstein observes, 'Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed', what we take to be musical, beautiful and ethical. If, according to Wittgenstein, "a poet too has constantly to ask himself; 'but is what I am writing really true?'" (CV 40), one has to raise the same question: 'Is what I am doing really true?' Here, the claim to truth expresses the claim that one way of living/being human is uniquely correct and that the standards embodied in this fundamental attitude are to be recognized by everyone just because this is so. We are committed to the truth of what we do and we cannot be indifferent regarding the truth of what we believe. One does not typically come to ethical perspectives through empirical observation and experimentation or philosophical investigations. Philosophical investigations clarify the concepts involved and their meanings as given by synoptic representations of the respective practices in ethical forms of life. One's belief and understanding of them are ultimately shown in one's life. The practices and beliefs are internally related and like other aspects of life, Ethics and Aesthetics are also "characterised by what we can and cannot do" (Z 345).[19] This is not a matter of not having sufficient explanations. We have reached the bedrock of explanations. At the bedrock level, however, the ethical and aesthetical practices do not stand alone; they are interwoven with other empirical claims and value judgements and held together by what lies around them.

They typically persuade others to recognize the validity of their claims, but their considerations provide only a framework or system of

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[18]Luntley, M. *Wittgenstein: Meaning and Judgement*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, 110.

[19]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, eds., Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967. The abbreviation Z is used in the text.

reference rather than an independent foundation. They can only persuade others with the need to make a fundamental option that cannot be made on the basis of scientific evidence or philosophical investigations. One can learn this knowledge not by taking a course in it, but through experience and training. One can also teach others by giving from time to time the right tip. – 'This is what 'learning' and 'teaching' are like here. – What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments' (PI p. 227).

The rules here do not form a theoretical system but people follow them rightly as shown in their practices and ultimately in their lives. Wittgenstein wrote: "One can freely compare a firmly rooted picture in us with a superstition; but one can also say that one must always come to a firm ground, be it now a picture or not so that a picture at the source of all thoughts must be respected and not be treated as superstition (Nachlass138, 32b-33a.)."[20] Moreover, "If someone asks: How could the surroundings force the ethical in someone? – the answer is that he may indeed say, "There's no such thing as must", but at the same time under such circumstances such & such will be done' (Nachlass 173, 17r.)."[21] Aesthetical and ethical practices find their final justification in the stream of life. Life remains, as in the case of other practices, the bedrock of explanations.

5. Use of Pictures in Aesthetical and Ethical Discourses

In Wittgenstein's terms, we use pictures in our aesthetic and ethical discourses. These pictures are from our lives in the world and they are seen from an ethical/aesthetic point of view so that they correspond to ethical/aesthetic experience. "The picture has to be used in an entirely different way" (LC 63) from the way we use pictures in empirical matters. "An image (*Vorstellung*) is not a picture (*Bild*), but a picture (*Bild*) can correspond to it" (PI 301).[22] A picture can correspond to an idea or concept of aesthetical/ethical. However, the picture itself is not aesthetical or ethical; it is used in such discourses. "To believe in the truth of such a

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[20]"*Ein in uns festes Bild kann man freilich dem Aberglauben vergleichen, aber doch auch sagen, daß man immer auf irgendeinen festen Grund kommen muß, sei er nun ein Bild, oder nicht, und also sei ein Bild am Grunde alles Denkens zu respektieren und nicht als ein Aberglaube zu behandeln.*"

[21]"*Fragt man: Wie könnte die Umgebung den Menschen, das Ethische in ihm zwingen? – so ist die Antwort, daß er zwar sagen mag "Kein Mensch muß müssen," aber doch unter solchen Umständen so & so handeln wird*"

[22]*Vorstellung* is better translated as idea or concept rather than image to bring out the contrast from *Bild* (picture).

picture is to adopt what it says as one's norm of truth."[23] Moreover, as Wittgenstein observed, "a simile must be a simile of something. And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile I must also be able to drop the simile and describe the facts without it" (LE 10). In the case of ethical and aesthetical language, however, there are no facts behind the similes that could be independently described. "And so what at first appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense" (LE 10).

The *Tractatus* used an a priori, logical method with the assumption that language must be purified and analysed to conform to the logician's ideals. In contrast, the *Investigations* used a descriptive method: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that" (PI 340). According to the *Tractatus* philosophical problems arise because "the logic of our language is misunderstood" (T Preface). We have these problems, according to the *Investigations,* because "we do not command a clear view of the use of our words" (*PI* 122). Though in both works he was concerned to find the limits of language and thought, in the *Investigations*, he moves from the realm of logic and form to that of ordinary language and actual use as the centre of the philosopher's attention and from an emphasis on definition and analysis to description of 'language-games,' 'family resemblance' and 'stream of life.' Ethical and aesthetic discourses could also be better understood and described in terms of 'language-games,' 'family resemblance' and 'stream of life.'

In his *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein made a distinction between relative and absolute value; the former is an empirical judgement while the latter is an ethical value statement. He clarified: "although all judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statement of facts, no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value" (LE 6). Aesthetic judgements are also not statements of facts and statements of facts cannot express aesthetic value. Language of information is different from the language of aesthetics and ethics. It is not that we use a different language but a different use of the language. "Do not forget that a poem even though it is composed in the language-game of information is not used in the language-game of giving information" (Z 160). He observed, "Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, natural meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I were to pour out a gallon over it" (LE 7).

[23]Phillips, D. Z. *Wittgenstein and Religion*, London: Macmillan Press, 1993, 44.

Wittgenstein in his *Lecture on Ethics* narrated three pictures of absolute value: wonder that anything exists, feelings of absolute safety and absolute guilt and related them with the religious pictures of God as Creator, Father and Judge respectively. His ethical thoughts were interwoven with religious beliefs, though he did not consider himself as a religious person. He was using a kind of *via eminentiae* to speak on Ethics – wonder that anything exists, feelings of absolute safety and absolute guilt. Believers could see these experiences as related to God. Wittgenstein compared them with the views of God as Creator, Father and Judge. These pictures are used often in literary works. The first, the experience of wonder at the existence of the world is, in his view, exactly what "people were referring to when they said that God created the world." According to him,

> When someone who believes in God looks around him and asks, "Where did everything that I see come from?" "Where did everything come from?" he is not asking for a (causal) explanation; and the point of his question is that it is the expression of such a request. Thus, he is expressing an attitude toward all explanations (RC 317).[24]

This is not a scientific enquiry regarding the origin of the world but wonder at the existence of the world here and now. In other words, this is to see the world as a miracle (LE 11). A miracle, for Wittgenstein is "a gesture which God makes" (CV 51); "It must be as it were a sacred gesture" (CV 57). For believers this is to confess God's presence and power in the created world; to see the world as God's world rather than merely as a material world, 'my world' or 'our world.' The scientific point of view does not see the world as a miracle, but something that is there for exploration, experimentation and explanation. From a scientific point of view, "the world is all that is the case" (TLP 1). Scientists try to understand its workings and to control the order of events. They are not typically moved by wonder but curiosity. There is nothing 'mystical' about it. Religious believers, on the other hand, see the world in its relation to God. The world is seen as God's world; he created it and sustains it miraculously.

The feeling of absolute safety has been described as feeling safe in the "hands of God" (LE 10). Malcolm, in his *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, mentions an incident in Wittgenstein's life at about the age of twenty-one that had caused a change in his attitude to religion.

> In Vienna he saw a play that was a mediocre drama, but in it one of the characters expressed the thought that no matter what happened in

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[24]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*, G. E. M. Anscombe, ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 1977. RC is used as abbreviation in the text.

> the world, nothing bad could happen to him – he was independent of fate and circumstances. Wittgenstein was struck by this stoic thought; for the first time he saw the possibility of religion.[25]

Only in the hands of God is one absolutely safe. To be safe normally means that I am protected from some perceived bad states of affairs. It is categorically different ('nonsense,' according to LE) to say that I am safe whatever happens. This is to give an absolute value, which can be seen only in relation to God, the Absolute Reality. Again this is a special use ('misuse,' according to LE) of the word 'safe' as the other example of wonder at the existence of the world (LE 9). In his personal life, however, Wittgenstein could not submit himself into God's hands: ""Trust in God." But I am far away from trusting God. From where I am to trusting God is a long way,"[26] he wrote in his diary in 1946 (Nachlass 133, 9r). He believed, however, that "a being that is in relation with God is strong" (Nachlass 183, 56).[27]

The experience of absolute guilt is "described by the phrase that God disapproves of our conduct" (LE 10). According to Malcolm,

> Wittgenstein did once say that he thought that he could understand the conception of God, in so far as it is involved in one's awareness of one's own sin and guilt. ... I think that the ideas of Divine judgement, forgiveness, and redemption had some intelligibility for him, as being related in his mind to feelings of disgust with himself, an intense desire for purity, and a sense of the helplessness of human beings to make themselves better.[28]

The thought that one-day he has to give an account of his life is a dominant streak in his religious remarks. It is not just that the Judge would examine his case, but that he should judge himself is overpowering for Wittgenstein. As he struggled for perfection, he always found himself wanting; sometimes outright disgusting.

> This sentence [God disapproves of our conduct] can be, for example, the expression of the highest responsibility. Just imagine, after all, that you were placed before the judge! What would your life look like, how would it appear to yourself if you stood in front of him? Quite irrespective of

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[25]Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein*, 58.

[26]""*Auf Gott vertrauen.*" *Aber vom Gottvertrauen bin ich weit entfernt. Von da, wo ich bin, zum Gottvertrauen ist ein weiter Weg.*"

[27]"*Ein Wesen, das mit Gott in Verbindung steht, ist stark.*"

[28]Malcolm, N. *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, 59.

how it would appear to him & whether he is understanding or not understanding, merciful or not merciful (Nachlass183, 147).

In spite of the fact that God is a terrible or merciful Judge who would examine my life in the strictest possible way (or with understanding) I must so live that I can stand before him when he comes (Nachlass 183, 185). Here the ideal of the duty of a genius becomes the duty of a slave to the master. In his personal life Wittgenstein could not submit himself to become a slave, though he prayed: "Lord, if only I knew that I am a slave!" (Nachlass 183, 210).[29] He also confessed: "I cannot utter the word "Lord" meaningfully. Because I do not believe that he will come to judge me; because that says nothing to me. And it could only say something to me if I were to live quite differently" (CV 38). Here also philosophy cannot resolve the truth of the issue whether there is a God, whether he is merciful or very strict, or whether there is a judgement.

Wittgenstein related his ethical views not only with religious pictures but also with aesthetical values. Though an admirer of Kierkegaard he seems to have brought closer the aesthetical, ethical and religious in their distinction from scientific and empirical descriptions. According to him, "The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man" (TLP 6.43). The aesthetical and ethical worlds are categorically different from the empirical world. It is not an empirical difference but in the way we live, move, and have our being in the world. It is the life that gives meaning and significance to our words and deeds, which includes aesthetical and ethical.

6. Conclusion

What I learn from Wittgenstein is that one has to take aesthetics and ethics as something fundamental and resist temptations to explain it or to reduce it to something else for which a philosophical or scientific point of view is capable of providing an answer. The aesthetical and ethical are fundamental not because of any epistemic or phenomenological property, but by virtue of the place it occupies in our lives. Following Wittgenstein, ethical and aesthetic language is a matter for "A Grammatical Investigation." "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is. (Theology as grammar)" (*PI* 373). "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that" (*PI* 340). In a grammatical investigation we ask questions like: "How did we learn the meaning of this word? "How would one set

[29] "*Das Knien bedeutet, daß man ein Sklave ist.* (*Darin könnte die Religion bestehen.*) *Herr, wenn ich nur wußte, daß ich ein Sklave bin*!"

about teaching a child to use this word?" (*PI* 77, 244). "In order to get clear about aesthetic words you have to describe ways of living. We think we have to talk about aesthetic judgments like "This is beautiful," but we find that if we have to talk about aesthetic judgments we don't find these words at all, but a word used something like a gesture, accompanying a complicated activity" (*LC* 35). This is also true about ethical judgements; we need to describe ways of living for clarifying ethical concepts and precepts.

A grammatical investigation shows that the use of the words like 'good,' 'beautiful,' and 'just' have rich filigree patterns and remain concepts without fixed boundaries. We may draw the boundaries to serve particular purposes. However, "A sharper concept would not be the same concept. That is: the sharper concept wouldn't have the value for us that the blurred one does" (LW I, 267).[30] Following Augustine, one could say regarding many of the key aesthetic and ethical words like 'good,' 'beautiful' and 'just:'

> Something that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it, is something that we need to remind ourselves of. (And it is obviously something of which for some reason it is difficult to remind oneself) (PI 42).[31]

In fact, the search for an object that stands for 'beauty' or 'good' is the result of ignorance regarding both the language and truth of the aesthetical and ethical. It is the deep-seated philosophical prejudice that bewitches us to treat all words as names referring to objects. Aesthetical and ethical language is part of human language-use and forms a kind of family resemblance from a varied and interconnected complex network of different language-games. All are not of equal value, but they overlap and crisscross, witnessing and contributing to the richness of human experience, shedding light on the nature of Aesthetics and Ethics. It is to be reminded that we do not use any special language in these fields of human life. It is a special use of our ordinary language. A critical understanding of the use of the word would involve looking into the actual uses of the word, their internal coherence, their functions in the stream of life and how they are related to the rest of life. We should remind ourselves constantly of Wittgenstein's repeated observation that 'Only in the stream of thought and life do words

[30]Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on The Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. I, ed., G. H. Von Wright, and Heikki Nyman, trans., C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue, London: Basil Blackwell, 1990. The abbreviation LW I is used in the text.

[31]He quoted Augustine in Latin, "*quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.*"

have meaning' (Nachlass 137, 29a, 41b, 66a; 138, 24b; 232, 765; 233a, 35).[32] The attempts to find the meanings of aesthetical and ethical vocabulary, removing all their surrounding thought and life are bound to fail. The meaning of such words cannot be found, if one excludes all the ethical and aesthetical discourses and practices that are interwoven with other aspects of human life. Once these familiar surroundings are excluded, 'good,' 'beautiful,' 'just,' etc. becomes problematic, which is not the case in the particular language games. The concept of 'good,', 'beautiful,' 'just,' etc. are characterized by their particular functions in human life (Z 532). One would like to say 'good,', 'beautiful,' 'just,' etc. have this position in our life; has these connexions. That is to say: we only call 'good,', 'beautiful,' 'just,' etc. what have these positions, these connexions.[33] Wittgenstein asks: "How did we learn the meaning of this word? From what sort of examples? In what language-games?" "How would one set about teaching a child to use this word?" (refer PI 77, 244). We should also remind ourselves, "we learn words in certain contexts" (BB 9) and explore those contexts of applications.

What I learn from Wittgenstein is that one has to take these aesthetical and ethical concepts as something fundamental and resist the temptation to explain them or to reduce them to something else for which a philosophical or scientific point of view is capable of providing an answer. These concepts are something fundamental not because of any epistemic or phenomenological properties, but by virtue of their place it occupies in human lives.[34] Scientists are not called upon to pass judgements on the truths about aesthetics and ethics; they are not susceptible for empirical verification. Nonetheless we cannot be genuinely indifferent to the question of whether our aesthetic and ethical judgements are true or not. If we discover that those truths are false, we reject them. There are in our lives, however, many more truths than are acquired by way of personal verification. That does not mean that they are not real. As in other matters of philosophy, though hard to achieve, realism but not empiricism (RFM 325) is the noble goal in a philosophical discourse on Aesthetics and Ethics, after Wittgenstein.

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[32]"*Nur in dem Fluß der Gedanken und des Lebens haben die Worte Bedeutung.*"

[33]'The concept of pain is characterized by its particular function in our life' (Z 532). 'Pain has this position in our life; has these connexions; (That is to say: we only call "pain" what has this position, these connexions)' (Z 533).

[34]Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Religion*, 233.

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